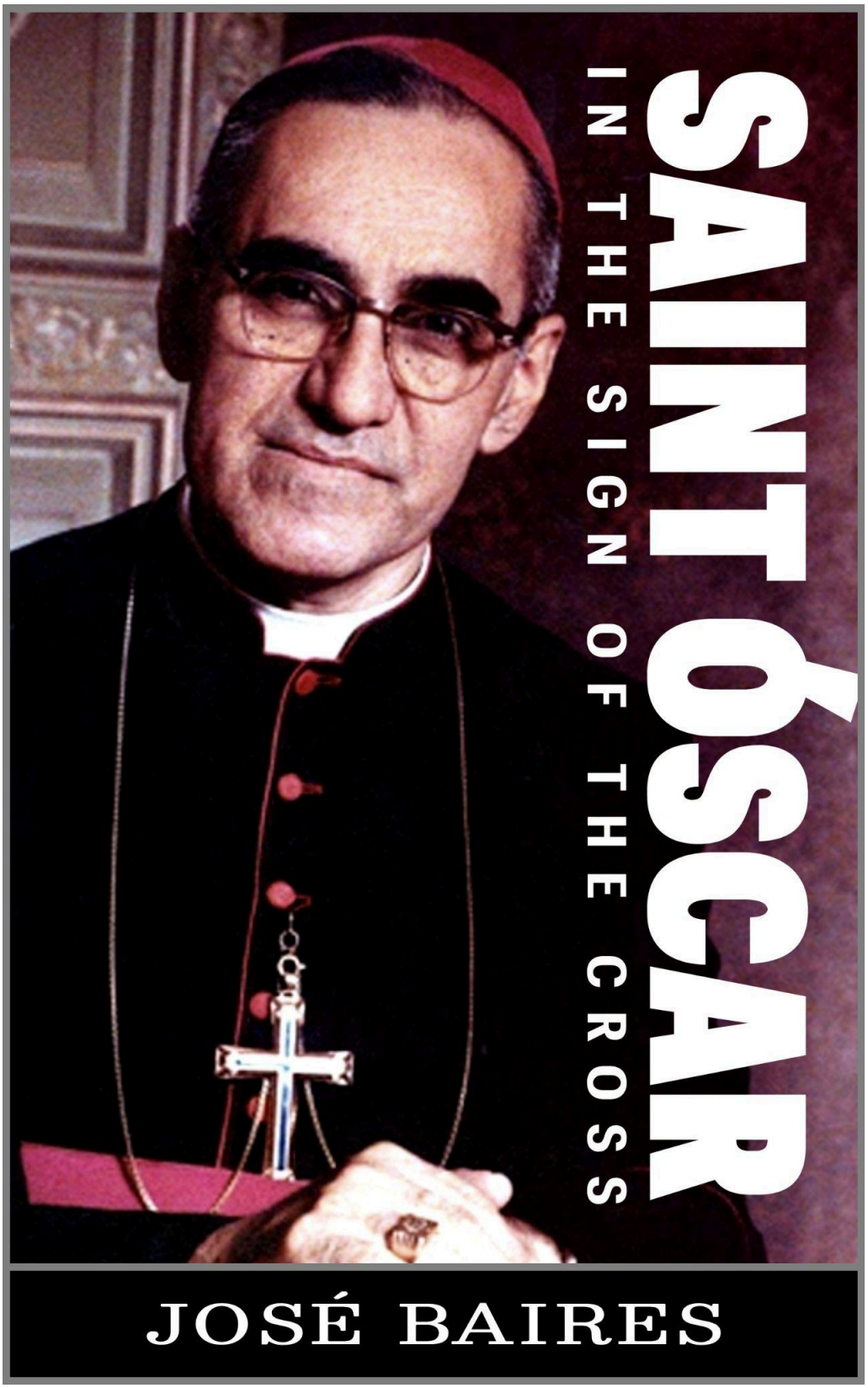
SAINT ÓSCAR
IN THE SIGN OF THE CROSS
JOSÉ BAIRES

Title.

"Archbishop Romero was assassinated for standing firm in his faith: the same battle Christians are fighting today. His voice should have been silenced, but his testimony speaks even louder."

SAINT OSCAR.

IN THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

José Baires - Gian Luca Bianco.

Dedication.

For Saint Teresa.

Saint Oscar appeared at the right time in the history of a country torn by adversity. He chose to proclaim the Word of God, not as a refuge, but as a strength to accept what history has placed before him with no escape. When war tears apart a people and human rights are trampled upon, left-wing or right-wing discourses become useless masks. The only thing that remains is the dignity that every person possesses.

Therefore, those who seek God in the depths of their spirit cannot remain silent. They are called to raise their voices for peace, for dialogue, to support a coexistence that recognizes equal rights and duties. A coexistence that defends, above all, life as the supreme good, protected not by firearms, but by something stronger: the word and forgiveness.

José Baires.

Legal notice.

This edition is a selected transcription of original public domain material. Each entry has been carefully edited and formatted by the author for maximum clarity. No copyright is claimed on the original entries. All editorial contributions are the property of the author. Any inconsistencies reflect the oral nature of Archbishop Romero's recordings and preserve their historical authenticity.

Theme.

Man discovers that his highest calling is intimacy with God, in that inner cell where He descends to converse in silence. There, his personal destiny and his role in history are decided, because the world cannot be built without us and without each person's right to forge the common good.

Preliminary note.

This book does not aim to reopen trials or reconstruct his death, already abundantly documented, but to contemplate Saint Oscar in his inseparable duality: the simple pastor, firm in his words and constant in his homilies, a voice of hope and a sign of justice, who gave his life in the Eucharist; and the interior man, reserved and serene, faithful to a mission that transcends him, defending the Church and accompanying his people in difficult times.

Editor's note.

This edition was prepared from the original recordings of Archbishop Romero, carefully transcribed to faithfully reflect his voice and words. Some previous versions contained variations or errors that have been corrected here, so that the reader receives a faithful, intimate, and authentic account of his thought. Even apparent grammatical or stylistic inconsistencies have been preserved to respect the oral quality of the recordings.

The goal is not to distort, but rather to facilitate access to a unique experience that illuminates both the spiritual and human dimensions of Monsignor Romero. The editorial work consisted of selecting, organizing, and formatting the text, offering clarity without losing its power or authenticity. Therefore, this work presents itself as an indispensable source for understanding not only the pastor and martyr of the Church, but also the man who responded with faith and courage to the challenges of his time. For editorial

consistency, some acronyms have been adapted to their stylized form, such as Unesco instead of UNESCO, always prioritizing ease of reading.

Explanatory note.

There are various sources regarding the quantity and organization of Archbishop Romero's recordings. To avoid confusion, this edition presents the text in a continuous and coherent format, without adopting a specific numbering of the cassettes. The accuracy of the consulted transcriptions has been maintained.

Introduction.

What tool does humanity have to transcend borders, open consciences and reawaken hope?

It's not the sword or brute force: it's the word. That gift that distinguishes our species and that, through language and writing, has allowed us to transmit truth, share knowledge, and move generations. With it, human beings rise above the ephemeral and leave their mark on history.

With this certainty in mind, we approach the figure of Oscar Arnulfo Romero. A discreet and serene man, he was called to occupy the see of San Salvador and, from the pulpit, became a beacon of courage in the face of the repression that was suffocating his people.

Why does his voice continue to resonate decades later, becoming a sign of hope and defiance?

Because his oratory knew no bounds: it reached farmers and workers, entrepreneurs and soldiers, children and the elderly. For the humble, it was a consolation; for the powerful, it was a challenge.

"The Church must enter into concrete history, with its struggles and sorrows, without fear of losing its identity. Only in this way can we be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because faith in God never distances us from history, but engages us within it."

YEAR 1978.

MCMLXXVIII.

SAINT OSCAR.

CHAPTER 1.

Year 1978.

Diary from March 31st to April 12th.

1978.

Friday, March 31, 1978.

The most important meeting of the day was with lawyers and law students, who were invited to discuss the difficulties the Church encounters when seeking legal assistance in numerous cases of human rights violations.

We have a small operational office at the Externado San José, called "Legal Assistance," but it's insufficient to handle so many cases from so many different backgrounds. At the same time, it was suggested that we establish a permanent team of honest lawyers and law students to whom the Church could turn for legal advice.

The invitation was met with genuine enthusiasm, with approximately twenty people, including lawyers and law students, in attendance. If you'd like to know the names, please ask Dr. Roberto Cuéllar of the Legal Aid Office, who has a list of those invited and who attended.

Among the specific initiatives enthusiastically proposed was a request for amnesty for those captured in connection with the San Pedro Perulapán events. A petition to this effect, requesting amnesty, will be presented to the Assembly next week.

The idea of providing assistance to the Legal Aid Office was also welcomed, tasked with collecting the necessary cases and forwarding them to the lawyers present. The lawyers offered to assist with their practices, provided the matters concerned were routine, and also to support business operations when necessary. The idea of organizing a bar association was also proposed, with the possibility of membership for non-invited

members or those from other sources, in order to create a consultative body, as requested by the Church in its legal difficulties.

It was also proposed that we meet periodically to discuss these issues. I thanked them and expressed my satisfaction with the welcome they had given to the invitation and with the goodwill they had shown as advocates of Christian conscience.

Saturday, April 1, 1978.

Like every first day of the month, I preached the Holy Hour and celebrated Mass at Divine Providence Hospital. After Mass, I received an audience requested by the Confederation of Schools of the Archdiocese, the principal of La Asunción School, Sister Inés, and the principal of Sacred Heart School, Mother Nelly Rodríguez.

I was told that they had met the day before and that same Saturday to discuss the possibility of demonstrating in solidarity with the farmers of San Pedro Perulapán and also in solidarity with the Archbishop's requests for truthful information and other measures to benefit local farmers.

I expressed my concern to them, particularly that they might confuse this demonstration of Christian and evangelical solidarity with the strike that the Andes Teachers' Association is promoting for those same days, and that Catholic schools might be manipulated by Andes.

They told me they had considered this risk and that there were also difficulties within the Confederation because not everyone agreed. I told them I would leave the

matter to their discretion and that I would appreciate it if they didn't compromise my name in this discussion.

That same evening they held a session and I did not know the results of their deliberations that day.

Sunday, April 2, 1978.

At eight o'clock, as usual, I celebrated Holy Mass in the Cathedral, always packed with faithful who flock to me from the parking lotAcross the street. I read, with brief comments, the Archbishop's statement regarding the events of San Pedro Perulapán, which can be read in its entirety in the archive.

And the main focus of my reflection was the biblical readings with this theme: "The risen Christ is alive, and he lives in his community of Christians on this earth."

I explained the characteristics of the risen Christ, as St. Thomas confessed: Lord and God, messenger and architect of humanity's redemption; his greeting of peace is the synthesis of the gift the Father sent us in Christ: salvation. I also presented the Risen One as the object of our hopes in the pilgrim Church, longing for an encounter with the Christ who must return. And in my second thought, I explained the characteristics of this Christian community that brings the spirit of Christ to the world.

The Gospel tells us how the risen Christ sent the Church, just as the Father had sent him; and how, breathing on the new Church, like God in Paradise on Adam's clay, he

inspired in it the new life that the Church must bring to the world: "Receive the Holy Spirit."

The characteristics of the community are found in the first reading of the Acts of the Apostles, where the book states that the multitude lived a common life; it was a community in which prayer abounded, they gathered to break bread, and they lived a great hope. These were, therefore, the ideas of what the Church should be like, the community that follows Christ and is Christ's presence in this world, Christ's saving mission.

A community of life, which grows, and is a community where life finds salvation. As the Book of Acts says: "the number of those being saved increased." A community of life also manifested its communion through the mutual sharing of God's blessings; even natural blessings were placed at the service of all. A community of life because of its growing reputation, with the authority of the apostles.

But secondly, it was primarily a community of faith, and this is what distinguishes the society of the Church from any other society or group.or human organizationI have drawn attention to this aspect so as not to confuse the Church with other organizations and to avoid attributing the false slanders now attributed to it as an architect of violence.

I told them that this community of faith and Spirit must be a community of obedience to the doctrine of the apostles, a community of prayer, a community nourished by sacramental signs; and finally, an eschatological community that therefore lives the hope of an afterlife.

At three in the afternoon, I accepted an invitation from the Salesian Sisters of the Maria Auxiliadora School, where they have their festive oratory for girls. A confirmation service had been scheduled for the young women, and the Mass was very beautiful.

The singing vibrated with a unique enthusiasm. In the Gospel, I explained to the community this inspiration of Jesus: it was the Spirit of God given to those who believe in Jesus Christ. I explained Confirmation, its meaning, the rite, and I administered this sacrament of the Holy Spirit to them. There were about forty young women prepared for the sacrament of Confirmation that afternoon.

At half past six in the evening, in the Miramonte district, at the parish church of the Resurrection - the patronal feast of this parish is entitled the Resurrection of the Lord - the parish community was numerous and filled the church; the Augustinian fathers and other priests of the vicariate of that area of the city concelebrated the mass.

I preached the Gospel, I mentioned the empty tomb of the risen Jesus Christ and the closed tomb of Father Alfonso Navarro who last year, on this very feast, had shown all his enthusiasm as a parish priest with a parish that bears witness to the Resurrection of Christ.closed tomb, After Having Itmurder; one of two priests killed by bullets last year.

That closed tomb could have signified the failure of Christ's redemption and resurrection, and yet it was a sign of hope: our dead must rise again, and the tombs of our dead, which today are sealed by the triumph of death, will one day be like those of Christ: empty tombs.

Christ's empty tomb is an evocation of the final triumph, of the accomplished redemption. In the meantime, we must fight, we must work so that the message of

Christ's empty tomb illuminates with hope all our work on earth until the Lord's redemption is accomplished.

After Mass, the Miramonte parish community prepared a snack for everyone to enjoy. It was a precious experience of the parish's family spirit. The Augustinian Fathers who preside over this parish are worthy of praise for their enthusiastic work and continue to serve as a model parish community.

Monday, April 3, 1978.

The Episcopal Conference of El Salvador has called an emergency meeting. I initially intended not to attend, as the invitation had only arrived on Monday morning. However, at the suggestion, I attended because the topic of the priests' letter to the Nuncio would be discussed, and by being present, I could offer an opinion in defense of the priests.

Indeed, I arrived at the meeting and saw that everything was ready. Archbishop Rivera's telegram announcing his absence due to a meeting in Guatemala and asking us to wait, as the matter required a plenary meeting of the bishops, was ignored, despite my support for Archbishop Rivera's request.

Naturally, with only four bishops opposing my vote, the meeting was held. I also complained that the document they were referring to had already been drafted. I was told that a basic document was always presented, but I saw that it wasn't just a basic document, since it hadn't been discussed, but that it was already beginning to be signed, despite my reasons for objecting.

My reasons were these: the priests addressed a letter to the Nuncio; what is appropriate here is that the Nuncio invites the priests to dialogue. Another reason is that, in the bishops' document against the priests, the Holy See is accused of guilt. I distinguished between the Holy See-primarily the figure of the Pope, to whom these priests feel united by faith-and the figure of the Nuncio, who represents the Pope and does not always clearly represent him.

I evokedIn this regard, several factors, both here and in Guatemala, have made the Nuncio an undesirable figure. Another reason is that the priests' document itself should be analyzed, focusing not only on the inappropriate wording or expressions, but also on the actions they accuse the Nuncio of, due to a lack of Christian witness. Priests should not be accused without having been heard; it seemed to me that publishing this document would foment division among the bishops, since I was unwilling to sign it.

Despite all these reasons, the document had already been submitted for signature to four bishops: Bishop Aparicio, president of the Conference; Bishop Barrera, bishop of Santa Ana; Bishop Álvarez, bishop of San Miguel; and Bishop Revelo, auxiliary bishop of San Salvador.

The document was approved, and I was subjected to many false accusations by the bishops. I was told that my preaching was subversive and violent; that my priests had caused between the peasants the atmosphere of violence and that we do not have some abuses committed by the authorities. The archdiocese was accused of interfering in other dioceses, causing divisions among priests and pastoral unrest in other dioceses.

The Archbishopric was accused of sowing confusion in the Seminary and that it was urgent for the Archbishopric of San Salvador to abandon the San José de la Montaña building. And a series of other slanderous and false accusations, to which I preferred not to respond.

It has been a bitter day because of this circumstance, and I regret that the division within the episcopate is increasing with this step, which seems unwise to me.

Tuesday, April 4, 1978.

Personally, I thank God because today marks thirty-six years since I was ordained a priest in Rome.

The clergy meeting was held. The topic of study was "Basic Communities." It was presented by Father Jesús Delgado. Oriented towards the consultation of the Latin American Episcopal Congregation of Puebla for next October.

The second part was the presentation, which provided information on the events of Holy Week and Easter in San Pedro Perulapán and other regions of our Archdiocese, where government repression has had many effects, violating the tranquility of those cantons and the dignity of human rights.

On our part we have published a statement commenting on this situation and showing solidarity with the suffering people.

Some parish priests brought catechists, farmers who had lived through these tragic hours of a terribly bloody Holy Week repression.

It was approved to send a vote of solidarity to the Archbishop in Rome on behalf of all the clergy and nuns present, in opposition to the bishops' document, which offended the Archbishop of San Salvador during their meeting and disqualified him with their statement, which will be published. This afternoon, an interview with a Swedish journalist and a dialogue with Father Jesús Delgado will address numerous issues of the episcopate and the Archdiocese.

Wednesday, April 5, 1978.

As we do every Wednesday, we held a working breakfast with representatives of the Presbyteral Senate and members of the Justice and Peace Commission. Today's consultation focused primarily on the bishops' publication in support of the Nuncio, Archbishop Gerada, regarding a letter addressed to him by several priests and nuns, who highlighted the anti-Christian nature they perceived in his actions. In the publication, the bishops express their solidarity with the Nuncio and, in a certain sense, offend the priests. I expressed my opinion on this matter to the bishops during the consultation, which is why I did not sign that declaration.

My reasons were these: first, because the meeting on Monday, April 3, urgently convened by the conference, did not seem appropriate to me. Bishop Rivera of Santiago de María was not present, and despite his telegram requesting that he be waited on, the meeting was not held, but a vote was taken against his request. For my part, I accepted Bishop Rivera's request and voted in favor. But since the remaining four wanted the

meeting, my vote was very small in comparison of the four of them were Monsignor Aparicio, Monsignor Barrera,mOnsignor Álvarez andMonsignor Revelo.

Secondly, I asked that he support the convenience and appropriateness of publishing, in these divisive times, a statement that would further divide opinion in our Church and would make the bishops appear very unhappy in the environment. Archbishop Revelo said, and responded, that he didn't care about the environment, but rather about fulfilling his duty. Another reason I spoke out was that before making a statement against the priests, I felt it was right to listen to them in dialogue, and, if possible, the Nuncio should also be present so that matters could be clarified first and perhaps it wouldn't be necessary to continue.

Another reason of mine was that perhaps I did not find a dispassionate analysis of the letter from the priests and nuns to the Lord Nuncio worthy of this condemnation, since it was necessary to analyze the facts to which that letter refers, facts that rather invite the Lord Nuncio to reflect in order to give a more Christian witness. I was referring specifically to those facts, mainly to the case of having supported Father Esquivel knowing that he was contrary to the opinion and pastoral line of his bishop.

Archbishop Aparicio took advantage of this opportunity to say that what I was defending in the priests against the Nuncio was the same thing I was doing with the dioceses of El Salvador, that my preaching was violent, subversive, that it was dividing the clergy and the dioceses, that the priests now looked more to the archdiocese than to their bishops.

And I don't remember how many other accusations were joined by my fellow priests: Monsignor Barrera, who called my preaching violent; Monsignor Álvarez, who

took advantage of the occasion to vent his dissatisfaction with me; and, strangest of all, Monsignor Revelo, recently appointed my assistant, also took advantage of the occasion to express his dissatisfaction with my approach, telling me I wasn't infallible when I explained that my approach was precisely that outlined in the documents of the Council, in the documents of recent papal encyclicals, and in those of Medellín.

According to Archbishop Revelo, I could have been mistaken in the application of these documents and, therefore, there was no obligation to agree with this line. I preferred to remain silent for the rest of the meeting, since the published document was read only once and no clarification was requested. Indeed, it was signed with this passionate fervor, which confirmed my initial words: "They've already rigged everything."

The consultants present at this morning's breakfast then expressed their opinion and preferred that I not provide any clarification, that the lack of my signature among the bishops' signatures was sufficient evidence, and that everyone understood that the published letter from the bishops in favor of the Nuncio was rather arousing curiosity about the letter, which many were unfamiliar with and would therefore force them to see what the clergy think of the Lord Nuncio. They also understood that the letter itself is very poorly written, alluding here to personal accusations from priests that are irrelevant, and that the letter itself actually contributes to defaming the Lord Nuncio and the hierarchy itself.

"It's a shame," they said, "that this will only further divide Catholics, already divided, and will only deepen their division." And if I wanted to clarify anything, it would be best to write to the Episcopal Conference, with a copy to the Nuncio and the Holy See, explaining why I didn't sign and explaining there my description of how this procedure was conducted.

The same applies to asking, when going to Monsignor Rivera, to write another letter expressing his disagreement with the meeting in which it was agreed to address this letter of support to the Nuncio.

After the meeting, this morning at nine, I was the Externado San José, at the Legal Aid Department, where several lawyers and law students had gathered to sign the amnesty petition, which they then took to the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the men and women tried in connection with the events in San Pedro Perulapán.

I was very pleased that on this occasion, lawyers and law students further strengthened their desire to remain united, to meet frequently, to jointly study legal issues, and to advocate for the needs of our people, especially the poor. In particular, they promised to study and analyze the Public Order Law and test its unconstitutionality. They will meet next Monday at 7 p.m. at the same location to agree on the frequency of meetings and the working method from then on.

Subsequently, a series of very interesting audiences were held at the Archbishop's Palace, such as that of the missionary group from Ricaldone, which was attended by several students from the Salesian Institute and students from the Colegio de La Asunción.

Mother Lidia Valle, now vicar of the Congregation of the Oblates of Divine Love, also arrived and told me about some problems in the same congregation.

Another interview was with Engineer Galván, who has contributed exemplarily to the organization of the diocesan Curia. He told me several discouraging facts regarding

the Caritas Commission, which we will need to examine in more depth, as well as some of the Archbishop's social communications projects.

It seems that our Ysax program is widely distributed, but not enough to saturate this growing anti-Church atmosphere; according to him, we need to insist on short programs, commercials, frequently throughout the day to penetrate those circles who don't specifically listen to longer programs and who have a misconception and negative view of our Holy Church.

On this day the letter that the bishops had sent appeared in the newspapers,DirectorAparicio, Barrera, Álvarez andRlet it be known; they turn to the Lord Nuncio protesting against the priests who have written to the Lord Nuncio asking for a more evangelical position.

The published letter has created a very unpleasant atmosphere for the bishops, as it is considered a reckless demonstration of disunity. The letter was not signed by Archbishop Rivera, who was not present at the meeting, nor by me, who, as usual, did not approve of its publication. Last Wednesday, I also conducted a radio interview, focusing primarily on the events in San Pedro Perulapán and answering some questions from Radio Ysax listeners.

Thursday, April 6, 1978.

After breakfast, I left with Father Leopoldo Deras for San Juan Opico, where I handed over the parish to Father Jorge Salinas, who was in Tacachico. From now on, he will be in charge of the administration of the parishes of Opico and Tacachico. After the

inaugural Mass, we had a fascinating meeting with the catechists, celebrants of the Word, and other collaborators in the fervent parish of San Juan Opico.

Personally, I felt a special emotion when I found myself in the hometown of my bishop, Monsignor Juan Antonio Dueñas y Argumedo, and of my brother in the priesthood, great friend and companion, MonsignorRafaelValladares, who died as auxiliary bishop of San Salvador.

Afterwards, we went to San Rafael Cedros, where Father Deras had gathered a huge crowd at the entrance to the church. I celebrated the confirmation of about 40 children in the church, a ceremony that took place during Mass and during which all present renewed their confirmation commitments.

I also met with the basic church community groups and the sewing academy, which is producing much fruit in San Rafael Cedros.

And in the afternoon, after San Rafael Cedros we went to Santiago de María, where I spoke with Monsignor Rivera, above all, about that unpleasant, accident of theThe publication of the bishops' letter to the Nuncio. This and other issues that deeply concern us as pastors in this climate of disunity within the Episcopal Conference led us to share nearly an hour of conversation. Afterward, he invited us to dinner, and I returned late that night. To add to my horror, a tire went flat on the road, and we returned to my house around 11:00 PM.

Friday, April 7, 1978.

Among the numerous visits that have come to the Archbishopric, I would like to highlight that of the Pauline Fathers, gathered from all the houses of Central America,to show me your solidarity and offer me your prayers in this difficult service of the Archdiocese.

Additionally, a group of students, along with a professor, brought tape recorders to interview me on various points regarding the situation of the Church in the country and its mission among us. The young women showed great interest in questions that concern many Salvadorans today. With God's grace, I believe I answered and succeeded in conveying the Church's message to that group of young people.

The luncheon took place at Don Pepe Simán's home, where an Englishman, Mr. Julián, was also present. He brought a letter and a special greeting from the Cardinal of England, demonstrating a very pastoral and affectionate solidarity that was a word of great encouragement to me. I returned the Cardinal of England's greeting with a fraternal embrace, a thank you, and a promise to write to him very soon. I was given the opportunity to speak in England and visit other European countries in June, presenting the situation of our Church.

My conversation with this Catholic, who has traveled to many Latin American countries and knows all our problems, gave me great encouragement and guidance. Just as my situation in El Salvador is very difficult, he told me that there are bishops in various Latin American countries in very similar situations, because neither their fellow bishops nor their environment often understand the commitment that the Gospel and the current doctrine of the Church require of their pastors. I therefore hope to be faithful to this doctrine and pray for all my fellow bishops who find themselves in the same difficult situations.

From four in the afternoon until at about AlleAt half past six or seven, I was with the major seminarians of the archdiocese to discuss various topics and we concluded with the Holy Eucharist, during which we reflected in the light of the Word of God.

In the evening, I finally went to schoolThe assumption,where the Sisters of the Assumption from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador met this week to review their work and the spirit of their congregation in their respective communities. After the devotional Mass, we had dinner and discussed the situation in these three sister countries: Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

Saturday, April 8, 1978.

A visit to the town of Dulce Nombre de María, in the department of Chalatenango, according to the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart who work there and who are experiencing some local problems.

However, my arrival and visit were deeply moving: the meeting in the village, the celebration of Holy Mass, and the subsequent encounter with the celebrants of the Word, the catechists, and other vital figures of the Church. It is a truly inspiring community, a vibrant one. Also present were the Carmelite missionary nuns and members of the nearby community of La Laguna, also in the department of Chalatenango.

These communities also participated in the meeting we held to conclude this visit, shortly before lunch. I had the impression that the problem the sisters were having with some people in the village had been resolved automatically, given the enthusiasm

expressed by all the other Catholics in the village and the cantons in supporting the sisters who had made this call.

An unpleasant detail at the entrance to the city was the aggressive attitude of a member of the National Guard who moved from the center of the street only when the crowd that had accompanied me to the meeting approached.

I noticed the shock, especially among the children, at that gesture, and I could easily conclude that they were waging what they call "psychological warfare" there in Dulce Nombre de María. This was noticeable among the people arriving from the cantons, a kind of fear, especially because they had spread the news that I would be arriving with some guerrillas and were trying to dissuade people from attending the ceremony and the meetings we had planned.

Sunday, April 9, 1978.

The usual Mass at eight o'clock in the Cathedral, with a homily on the theme of the feast or the Paschal Mystery.

Returning to the Israelite origins of theEaster celebration and how Christ, at Easter, accomplished redemption, which gives the mystery of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension the name of the Paschal Mystery, which becomes the Christian Easter. And in the day's readings, I found these characteristics of the Paschal Mystery: a mystery of liberation. In his Paschal Mystery, Christ redeems us from sin, death, hell, and every other form of slavery. I noted that Christian liberation is more complete and profound than any merely political, social, or economic liberation.

The second point I emphasized was sacramentality, the sacrament, the Church of Christ; and, therefore, a hidden presence of the Lord, yet a true presence with all his graces and redemptive powers in the Church. The passage about the disciples of Emmaus points to this hidden character of Christ, yet present in humanity's pilgrimage.

The third characteristic of our Paschal Mystery is its communal, ecclesial significance; it is a mystery that gives rise to a Church that is communion. And, finally, its eschatological character. This eschatological meaning is evident in this Sunday's readings, when Christ rebukes the disciples of Emmaus, saddened because they expected only temporary liberation, and teaches them through the prophets that it was necessary to suffer in order to enter into glory, the ultimate goal of Christian liberation.

Today the cathedral seemed more crowded than on previous Sundays.

In the afternoon, invited by the Parish of Divine Providence in the Atlacatl neighborhood, I went to celebrate Mass and participate in the anniversary celebration of the Legion of Mary in that parish, run by the Redemptorist Fathers.

Monday, April 10, 1978.

As I do every Monday, I prioritized interviews with priests. I spoke with Father Palacios, who informed me of his work in the basic ecclesial communities and his commitment to leading a unified ministry in the city of Santa Tecla. This is very comforting news, and I hope this difficult task will continue if, trusting in the Lord, we

work to unify the various sectors of that parish or those parishes, which are well-endowed with priests, nuns, Catholic schools, and lay people who have also been promoted.

We also discussed issues related to social communications in the Archdiocese with Father Rafael Moreno.

Father Abdón Arce, of the diocese of Santiago de María, visited me to invite me to his fortieth anniversary of priestly ordination.

This evening, we had an interesting interview with Father Hernández Pico, with whom we are preparing a pastoral letter on faith and politics. The entire consultation team, with whom we meet weekly, is working on it. In addition to our pastoral work, we discussed pastoral issues of great importance for our Archdiocese and for Latin America as a whole, especially in view of the Third Latin American Episcopal Conference of Puebla.

Tuesday, April 11, 1978.

This morning I celebrated Mass at La Asunción School with the high school students.

I took the opportunity to introduce myself and tell them I was happy to meet them in person, because they had surely heard of the two figures the Archbishop is portrayed in San Salvador: for some, he is the cause of all evil, a monster of evil; for others, thank God, for the common people, above all, I am the shepherd, "and how I wish you could

see the welcome they give to my word, to my presence, especially in the humble villages."

I introduced myself, well, as a pastor, I brought to life the message I'd shared everywhere, naturally applying it to the environment of La Asunción School. And so I spoke to them, developing these three words: the young woman, the woman, the Christian; using each of their adjectives to ask them to be a true hope for the Church, for their family, for their country. According to what the school's principal, Mother Inés, later told me, the message was very well received and left a positive impression on the school.

I then went to Mr. Rey Prendes's home, where other members of the Christian Democratic Party had invited me for breakfast to discuss their political perspective on our Church. It was a very enriching conversation, and I had the opportunity to once again define the Church's mission, which cannot be confused with political parties, although they sometimes pursue similar goals, such as social justice, the political participation of all citizens, etc.

They also made some very pertinent observations to me regarding a Church that is truly autonomous, independent of any political affiliation.

In the Archbishop's Palace, I found the priests and laity of the Vicariate of Cuscatlán and the Laity Commission gathered to discuss how, as a Church, we could better reach that sector of the department of Cuscatlán, so tormented by military operations, the Order, and other political forces attempting to repress any demonstration against the regime in power. As a mission of the Church, it was agreed to develop a campaign to calm tensions and also to provide impartial assistance to all the needs of that sector of the Archdiocese.

This opportunity will be used to organize relief committees in all parishes, cities, and cantons, which could serve as a basis for Caritas parish committees.

This afternoon, representatives of the board of directors of the Confederation of Catholic Schools visited me to inform me of the meeting they had held last Saturday, convened by the bishop and president of the Education Commission, Monsignor Aparicio, who, they said, intended to remove the current board and draw attention to the letter the federation's board of directors had sent to the Nuncio, along the same lines as the priests' letter asking the Nuncio to adopt a more evangelical approach.

The session appears to have been very stormy for Bishop Aparicio, who was the target of very serious complaints about his pastoral misconduct. Among these complaints was the suspension of ten priests for signing the letter against the Nuncio, a suspension that sparked much controversy across the country, particularly in the Diocese of San Vicente.

Meanwhile, there were also several private visits that took up the whole day.

Wednesday, April 12, 1978.

Beyond the private audiences, it was a very meaningful day. The consultation breakfast with Justice and Peace and representatives of the Presbyteral Senate was very interesting, focusing on the confusion that can arise between the Church and the Popular Revolutionary Block. Given that many members of the Block sought refuge in the Seminary during these persecution circumstances, primarily in the department of

Cuscatlán, it was criticized that many Block members took advantage of this circumstance to turn the Seminary into a sort of headquarters for their activities.

Rumors swirled that, from the crowd gathered at the Seminary, members of the Block had planned the occupation of the Cathedral and the attacks on the embassy that have made headlines today. We therefore insist on clarifying this position of the Church, which always has the obligation to protect the persecuted and to speak on behalf of the voiceless, seeking to clearly distinguish its mission, which is purely ecclesiastical, from any partisan aspect, especially if it has revolutionary overtones.

The rumors circulating about a commission that would travel to Rome to misinform the Archbishop with the intent of securing his dismissal were also discussed. The usefulness of traveling to Rome to inform him personally, using intermediaries familiar with that environment, was explored. The General House of the Society of Jesus was specifically mentioned. An effort was also made to involve other religious and lay people in this testimony in support of the pastoral care of the Archdiocese and to neutralize official information from the Nunciature and the powerful information emanating from the government and financial sectors.

I spent much of the afternoon with the Minor Seminary. We had arranged a meeting, which proved very interesting, since the young people preparing for high school are young people who deeply love their vocation and are also deeply connected to the concerns of the people and of our Church.

By answering their questions and summarizing at the end, both in the meeting and in the Holy Mass that was to conclude, I instilled in them the beauty of a vocation lived as obedience to God's call, and therefore, an effort to sanctify oneself and live united with

God and, on the other hand, from God, from that contemplation of God, to seek to reflect with God's thoughts on such a complicated and difficult people as the ones they will have to spiritually lead when they become priests, or even if they are not, as lay people who have had the opportunity to train even for just a few years in the seminary.

In the evening, we reviewed the committees that have been working to provide information, aid, and relief to those affected by the situation in Perulapán and the department of Cuscatlán. It was also a very lively meeting, where shortcomings were sincerely acknowledged, but which projected a service of charity and social justice for our Archdiocese, even after this emergency is over. Formal discussions are already underway regarding the creation of the Vicariate of Solidarity, which for now is merely a solidarity committee.

That day we also had a meeting with the leaders of the Popular Revolutionary Block, and on behalf of the Church, I was joined by the Vicar General, the Father in charge of social communications, and other lay members, particularly those from the Emergency or Solidarity Commission, who work in this area where the problems have arisen.

It was about the occupation of the Cathedral and the embassies, what their purposes were and that they respected the very purpose of the Church, without confusing it, even if the Church provided support, not precisely because it is a Popular Revolutionary Block, but because, from a Christian perspective, like a Good Samaritan, it sought to help all those in need, regardless of their color, and that, in this sense, they had been implored to maintain and ensure that their followers maintain respect for the autonomy of the Church and that they should in no way use it for their own ends.

For its part, the Church promised to continue assisting them and all those in need in the violation of their human rights. Specifically, it asked the Archdiocese to summon the ambassadors of the occupied embassies, and received advice to… create a diplomatic environment where diplomats could feel more comfortable. And if this were not possible, they had access to the diocesan Curia, a service the Church always impartially provides, to continue the dialogue they were seeking.

CHAPTER 2.

Year 1978.

Diary from April 13th to 28th.

1978.

Thursday, April 13, 1978.

This morning, the leaders of the Popular Revolutionary Block are awaiting a response from the ambassadors of the embassies occupied by the Block at the Archbishop's Palace. They will explain their situation and their wishes, which primarily concern influencing the government to withdraw military operations from their cantons so they can return to their homes and dedicate themselves to farming, which is now the time, given the approaching winter.

To this end, they also occupied the Cathedral; to draw the attention of the people of San Salvador to this situation, they also asked that this situation in El Salvador be made known to their governments and, through them, to the world.

On behalf of the Archbishopric, having requested mediation, Auxiliary Bishop Revelo agreed to represent the Church. According to telephone conversations, his presence was scheduled for 1:00 PM, the time the ambassadors were scheduled to meet with representatives of the Block at the Archbishopric.

The situation of those who occupied the Cathedral is extremely difficult, as the National Police have surrounded it and are blocking all access. Inside the Cathedral, there are many people, including women and children, who will suffer greatly if they are not provided with food. For its part, the Archbishopric has issued a bulletin expressing its position on this distressing situation, to which the Archbishopric has always responded with sentiments of true, impartial charity. It has been stated that the situation in the Cathedral is grave and that women and children are asked to be given special consideration.

The announcement that a Mass will be held in the Cathedral today at 5:00 PM was also rejected in that bulletin; the Archbishop was not informed of it; he is neither the one convening nor authorizing any celebration. However, he calls on the authorities and those responsible to normalize the situation without resorting to violence.

This morning I also met with the team preparing the pastoral letter I intend to publish for the upcoming feast of Pentecost. It will be titled and thematically "Faith, Church, and Political Engagement." This urgent need for clarifications appropriate to the current climate, characterized by so much political sensitivity and the risk of confusing

true faith with political action, has prompted me, along with a rather intelligent, united, and enthusiastic team, to prepare some guidelines that can serve as a guide for our people.

That evening, we prepared a recording with the seminarians, which will be published tomorrow in the "Youth Program," and which focuses specifically on next Sunday's theme, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. The team responsible for this program tastefully incorporated the opinions of two seminarians on the vocation to the priesthood; the participation of a nun on her religious vocation; and the participation of a married man to draw young people's attention to marriage as a Christian vocation.

The recording concludes with the refrain of the prayer composed by the Pope and published at the end of his message for next Sunday's World Day of Vocations.

Friday, April 14, 1978.

This morning, intense activity took place at the Information and Aid Commission established for the case of San Pedro Perulapán and the department of Cuscatlán. There were problems with the group that occupied the Seminary, or rather, the Parish of San José de la Montaña, who refused to submit to the Aid Commission's discipline. Led by the Popular Revolutionary Block, they appear to intend to use this loaned facility as a base for their political activities.

Their attention was drawn to this, since the Church does not wish to be confused with any activity of a merely partisan nature, but rather to serve the needy with the charity proper to the Church, which is that of the Gospel.

Furthermore, all lay people were convinced of the importance of placing themselves above any political affiliation, group, or organization, to serve, starting with the Church as a hierarchical institution, all those in need of its message and salvation. This contributed to significantly purifying the service with a true sense of the Church.

I interviewed several priests who had come from across the country for the meeting convened by the Priestly Cooperative. The meeting was scheduled for the Parish of San José de la Montaña, but out of caution, given the police surveillance, it was decided to move it to the Parish of Christ the Redeemer, at the end of Calle Escalón. At noon, concerned about the Christians occupying the Cathedral, and especially the parish priest, Monsignor Modesto López, we discussed what could be done, given that they were surrounded by police and were not allowed to enter, not even to bring them food.

A committee of teachers from Andes has asked the Church for help, as they have food for these people, but don't know how to deliver it.

I thought it wise to first speak with Bishop López. I was accompanied by the auxiliary bishop, Bishop Revelo, but we met at the corner of the Cathedral that faces the National Palace, where the person in charge, a lieutenant, of the operation surrounding the Cathedral is located. He told us he was sorry we couldn't enter without first contacting the Ministry or his superiors. They made me wait in the sun for almost half an hour.

When I saw he was taking so long, I told him I was sorry to leave and that I would return in the afternoon, perhaps in better conditions. Likewise, when I passed by the door of the Cathedral convent, I tried to obtain permission from a police officer guarding the entrance, but this too was impossible. Therefore, I could only contact the Monsignor by

phone and learn that he is living normally and that those who have taken refuge in the Cathedral, or rather, those who have occupied the Cathedral, are also safe.

This afternoon, Monsignor Revelo met with the President of the Republic, after speaking with me and promoting the specific point requested: that these farmers who are occupying the Cathedral or fleeing their cantons be guaranteed the right to return and find a peaceful environment in which to resume work after their forced escape.

The President agreed and said that if they left the Cathedral in small groups, he would be notified of the time to immediately withdraw the army or police and that he would also guarantee their peaceful return to the cantons to which these people belong.

Simultaneously, in the afternoon, the ambassadors of the embassies occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block-namely, the embassies of Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Switzerland-meeted with the Block's Speaking Commission. The Block presented its objectives that had led to these occupations. First, a peaceful return to their cantons; and second, the withdrawal of all military forces and any activity that might disturb their living conditions in the cantons.

Second, they demanded the release of the prisoners he had captured during military operations in those cantons. They also urged ambassadors to the President to achieve these goals, and their respective governments were asked to disclose the situation in the country.

After a lengthy discussion between the Ambassadors and the Block, some agreements were reached, but the Block declared that it still needed to consult its superiors on this final agreement and to postpone the final resolution until the following

day. If it hadn't been for this condition, the Ambassadors themselves would have gone that same afternoon to speak with the President. I insisted that it was right to expedite matters, because it meant another sleepless night for the occupiers, when the inconvenience could have been avoided, and also because the following day was Saturday, which would have been more difficult, with the hearings and all these bureaucratic procedures.

However, it was agreed that the Ambassadors will be notified by the Blocking Commission by Saturday morning to finalize the agreement and thus be able to respond to the request that the Diplomatic Corps, the four Ambassadors, will address to the President.

That night, I went with Monsignor Revelo to visit Monsignor Modesto López at the Cathedral and the occupants of the Cathedral. During Monsignor Revelo's audience with the President, the President had told him that we could go to the Cathedral whenever we wanted, as he would notify the police, who were still on guard. On the corner, still facing the National Palace, were the guardsmen, and they had us leave our car there. We walked, accompanied by the colonel, to the Cathedral convent. We spoke with Monsignor Modesto López, who was calm and normal, and then we went to speak with the group occupying the Cathedral.

The spirits are good, there are no seriously ill people, and there is already food.that of Caritas THE He HoI took the opportunity to offer everyone a little Christian guidance, calling them to true liberation, which is from sin, and to a love for Jesus Christ that excludes all resentment, hatred, and any phrase dissonant from Christianity. We then spoke with the leaders-about five of them-with whom we shared the news we had brought them, both from the Ambassadors' meeting and from the interview with the President.

They are awaiting orders from their superiors to leave the Cathedral, which won't happen until they are guaranteed to achieve their objectives. Therefore, while they hope everything will be resolved tomorrow, Saturday, they believe the occupation of the Cathedral could drag on for a long time.

It's clear from their side that they bear no grudge against the Church, but they aren't particularly interested in the Church's interests regarding their Sunday celebration, preferring instead to focus on the interests of their organization. They asked me to celebrate Mass for them the next day, which I promised.

When we left, after a long time, the colonel who had guided us was still there with other police officers and pointed out that a lot of time had passed, to which we replied, "It's not surprising, since we were at home," and that there was also much to talk about to persuade the situation to avoid violence; that our visit had therefore been useful to the rector of the Cathedral and the group occupying it.

The colonel, who had accompanied us from the car to the door of the convent when we entered, told us, because he had heard that they were about to throw a bomb at me and that is why I stopped.

Of course, I realized this was an exaggeration, one of those used to justify many military actions. He also offered to send me under escort so that nothing would happen to me on the return trip. I thanked him, but told him it wasn't necessary. And I headed to the Externado San José where, summoned by the Legal Assistance Service, a group of about fifteen lawyers and law students had gathered. They had been summoned by a circular signed by me, to continue this hopeful momentum of lawyers who wish to collaborate

with a more noble sense of their noble profession. I was very pleased that at ten o'clock that evening, when I arrived, they were still working with great enthusiasm.

They had already heard representatives of the Welfare Commission in court, who had come to ask them to intervene to resolve these employment issues and for other forms of legal assistance they could provide in the situation.

I noticed a strong sense of justice and profound regret for the situation our country finds itself in, where its rights have been violated. And they are willing to uphold the rule of law. Specifically, they discussed the request for amnesty for the political prisoners killed in this military operation in the department of Cuscatlán, as well as the study of the Law on the Guarantee Order, which is causing so much unrest and abuse among our farmers and in our cities. In short, an organization of jurists that, God willing, should flourish and become a great hope for our people.

Saturday, April 15, 1978.

I had invited the new auxiliary bishop, Bishop Revelo; the vicar general, Bishop Urioste; the chancellor, Father Brito; and the diocesan treasurer, Father Barrera, to breakfast together in the dining room of the Divine Providence Hospital. After discussing the status of our activities regarding the Cathedral and other related matters, I told them that the purpose of this family breakfast was to discuss and exchange impressions on the functioning of our diocesan Curia, since we are primarily responsible for it.

Father Brito, whom I asked to briefly explain the situation from his perspective, was able to conduct this meeting with a very humane spirit, first leading to a review of

the material aspects of the Curia: the situation of the offices, the physical work, the personnel, and we reached some very positive agreements.

It was time to go and wait for the Ambassadors, and Archbishop Revelo preferred we continue on another occasion, so we agreed: every Saturday we will have breakfast together to evaluate the week at the Curia and plan the next one. I left very happy because it is a source of hope and joy to see that Archbishop Revelo is seeking to join our team.Alreadyto see the real situation of our Archdiocese and to see, also very happy, the collaborators who, in very cordial union, try to best serve this particular Church that the Lord has entrusted to us.

From 8:00 to 13:00 a meeting of religious men and women took place at the Colegio de La Asunción.

I had been invited, but I was only able to attend at noon. As they were about to leave, I shared with the group my joy and satisfaction at the presence of this religious force of the Archdiocese, urging them to always remain faithful to the Church, which, as the reading from the Acts of the Apostles that day stated: "...a Church that grows in fidelity to the Lord and is filled more and more with the Holy Spirit each day."

We also discussed the situation, particularly those who occupied the Cathedral and the places devastated by the repression in recent days. I asked everyone for much prayer and a deep sense of solidarity with our suffering people, starting from our vocational position in the Church.

Monsignor Revelo waited all day to intervene in the dialogue between diplomats and the Popular Revolutionary Block, but it seems that the peasants have no intention of

resolving the problem of the occupations, but rather of continuing to occupy the Cathedral and the embassies to exert further pressure towards their objectives.

Sunday, April 16, 1978.

Since the Cathedral was occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block, I celebrated the traditional eight o'clock Mass, broadcast on the radio, in the church of El Rosario. The crowd was huge, and although the Mass itself couldn't be broadcast, the Radio Ysax technicians were kind enough to record it and broadcast it an hour later on the station.

Monday, April 17, 1978.

A meeting of bishops is scheduled for today to continue their study of the consultation document of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate. The primary purpose of the bishops' meeting was to continue their study of the consultation document of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate. Archbishop Rivera reported on the meetings held in the Central American region, in which he participated. Archbishop Revelo also reported on the meeting held in Bogotá of those responsible for ecumenism and the problem of non-believers, whose deliberations were also oriented towards the Puebla meeting.

I have the impression that there was also some manipulation before the bishops' meeting, since the vote for the delegate seemed to be very unanimous among Monsignor Aparicio, Barrera, and Alvarez, who cast their votes for Monsignor Revelo, winning, naturally, against Monsignor Rivera's vote, Revelo. mine. As it turned out, Monsignor

Revelo received three votes; Monsignor Rivera received two, which were probably Monsignor Revelo's and mine; and I received one vote, which was undoubtedly Monsignor Rivera's.

The same thing happened when it came to electing a priest from the diocesan clergy, and the same group elected Monsignor Fredy Delgado. I trust in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who will overcome all human intrigues, and that the meeting in Puebla will truly be like the one in Medellín, a Pentecost for our America, despite all human fears and intrigues.

In the afternoon, representatives of German television interviewed me and spoke on behalf of that country. The topic of the interview was the persecution of the Church in El Salvador; my views on the Puebla meeting; and the accusation of socialism leveled against our Church. I believe I expressed my thoughts with absolute frankness and sincerity and defended the Church's position.

That night, a terrifying fire broke out again, reducing to ashes a commercial area of San Salvador, located between Avenida Rubén Darío and Avenida 11.

Tuesday, April 18, 1978.

I attended the missionary meeting held at the Institute of the Somascan Sisters. The meeting was chaired by the new president of the Commission, Monsignor Barrera, and the new national director of the Missionary Works, Father Enrique Glodén, also of the Diocese of Santa Ana. As a former national director, I presented the accounts to the new

national director and participated in the deliberations to promote the missionary spirit in our country.

At the Archbishop's Palace, talks continued this morning between diplomats from the embassies occupied by the Revolutionary Block and representatives of the Block; on behalf of the Church, Archbishop Revelo acted as mediator. A final agreement was reached, and the occupants of the embassies and the Cathedral will be evacuated at noon. The Red Cross will also intervene to ensure the safety of the evacuation.

This operation was conducted in the afternoon, apparently with considerable disorganization. There were no means to return the occupants of these places to their cantons. I fear for them the reprisals they might suffer along the way or once they reach their cantons. God forbid!

But at eight in the morning, a new occupation began. The FAPU (People's Front), another grassroots organization, occupied the church of El Calvario. I spoke with representatives of this occupation to learn their goals and intentions in occupying a Catholic church. They expressed a desire to speak with the Archbishopric to request its cooperation; they want to protest the abuses against farmers, especially in the Suchitoto area, which have continued since the protests in Perulapán.

They want to send a letter to the Holy Father asking him to condemn the government of El Salvador for its human rights violations. I told them that the best way to reach the Pope was through the Nunciature and that they could use the parish priest of El Calvario to initiate a dialogue with the Nuncio.

That night, I went to visit Monsignor Modesto López, rector of the Cathedral, to thank him, congratulate him, and encourage him, for maintaining his presence throughout the days of the Cathedral occupation, contributing to the reign of order, which, thank God, prevailed throughout the occupation. Monsignor Modesto states that, on the part of the police guarding the Cathedral, they were generally very attentive, although he regrets one incident, when a police officer, perhaps unknowingly, scolded him and forced him to enter his convent when he wanted to appear, as usual, in the street.

Monsignor López provided spiritual assistance to the occupants of the Cathedral, celebrated Mass for them, and provided domestic and sanitary services in his convent.

After the Cathedral, I visited the Calvary Fathers and also spoke with the head of the occupation, reiterating the instructions I had given to the Commission that had arrived at the Archbishop's Palace. He told me they would likely withdraw from Calvary tomorrow. Let's hope this new situation doesn't get worse.

Wednesday, April 19, 1978.

Like every Wednesday, I had breakfast and met with the Justice and Peace Commission and Senate representatives. The main topic was to review the outline and ideas of the pastoral letter, which will be titled "Christian Faith, Church, and Political Engagement." The goal is to clarify the confusion that exists today regarding grassroots organizations and the commitment of Christians who belong to these groups, or the concerns of conscience of other Christians who feel it is their duty to organize politically. The concepts in preparation are very rich, and I hope that...It must be very pastoral and useful.

During the meeting we also discussed other current issues, particularly the occupations of the Cathedral, Calvary, and the embassies.

Among this morning's listeners, I found the visit of several university professors from the National University and the José Simeón Cañas University very significant. They expressed their solidarity with the idea of the Archbishopric, and their organization as a solidarity committee of university professors responds to the need to defend themselves, given that many abuses also occur in this area of university teaching. I thanked them for their visit. I urged them to continue cultivating feelings of solidarity, and I took the opportunity to share with them the Council's thinking on culture and the legitimate autonomy of temporal values. I also asked them to collaborate in the field of university pastoral care, something that greatly concerns me because I do not have a priest dedicated to this ministry.

Thursday, April 20, 1978.

I had invited some members of the Christian Democrats, who had invited me last week. Only two came, but we shared a very informative conversation with them, both for the Church in its evangelizing mission and for the party in its specific political mission. We agreed not to confuse the two missions, but that they can mutually help us lift people out of this vortex of violence in which we find ourselves.

Among this morning's visits, I can also mention that of Dr. Salcedo, who has just written paid articles against me and appears to have been on an investigative mission on

behalf of the government or powerful businessmen. I tried to explain to him the Church's mission, which points to the root of so many evils and that it is not the culprit.

Also very interesting is the news that Don Pepe Simán brought me from North America, regarding the concern they have there to help us defend human rights. Salvadorans with extensive knowledge of the Church, including comprehensive information, may visit to inform influential North American politicians in the State Department or in Congress and the Senate.

In the afternoon, I attended the meeting held in Apulo by the nuns who work in the various towns and parishes of the Archdiocese. Chaired by Bishop Urioste, the meeting aimed to share numerous experiences and receive new guidance. I was delighted to share, in an atmosphere of true Church and evangelical concern, the current situation of the Archdiocese.

The meeting concluded with a Mass in which I expressed sentiments of hope and optimism, which must be inspired by the Risen Lord, whom we must proclaim to our communities. The prayer of the faithful was a true expression of the concerns shared by all the sisters in these communities.

Friday, April 21, 1978.

Among this morning's audiences, I received Brother José, Provincial of the Marist Congregation, with whom I share a long-standing friendship. The main topic was the situation of Marist schools, particularly the Salvadoreño High School, within the broader federation of Catholic schools.

Frankly, I pointed out to him the negative attitude of some Marists who attend the meetings and who seem to lack confidence in the coordination of pastoral care with the Archdiocese. I complained about various attitudes of the Marist College, which seemed to lack collaboration with the pastoral ideals of our Archdiocese. The meeting concluded very positively, after many aspects were clearly explained to us. He also complained about the somewhat aggressive and marginalizing attitude of other colleges toward the Marist College.

We were finishing about what it wasIt was appropriate to promote a spiritual meeting so that we could achieve unity of criteria in pastoral care. He reaffirmed the Marists' solidarity with the hierarchy and with me personally, as we share very strong bonds of friendship.solid, with the Marist congregation.

Another interesting visit was that of a delegation of teachers from the Andes 21 de Junio group, who expressed their solidarity with the Archbishop's ministry and asked for my support in demanding the release of a teacher in Argentina, as well as other teachers who have disappeared here in El Salvador.

Another very important audience group is the CUTS workers, who came to tell me about their May Day plans and to express their solidarity with the Church. I took the opportunity, thanking them, to invite them to hold further meetings where they could delve deeper into the Church's social doctrine. We have scheduled another visit for next month, and I hope something will happen. Never cared for workers, even if they sometimes have other ideologies.

The afternoon give me was withThe seminarians of the Archdiocesan Major Seminary. A group of great hope. The dialogue was conducted with great frankness; today's theme was: "Why other dioceses do not look favorably upon the Archdiocesan approach." They had also listened to the frankness of seminarians from other dioceses and communities, who expressed the good they see in the Archdiocese, but also some of its shortcomings, and how, out of solidarity with their own bishops, they can no longer share our archdiocesan pastoral approach. We celebrated the final Holy Mass, in which I noted an authentic, youthful, and virile fervor.

Saturday, April 22, 1978.

This morning I attended the meeting of Catholic Colleges and Parish Schools in the Guadalupe Hall of the Seminary of San José de la Montaña. It was the first time they had met at the diocesan level; previously, the federation had been national, but at the last national session, it was agreed that every diocese would be represented.had to coordinate InAs a diocesan federation, it has its own schools and colleges. It gave me the opportunity to remind them of the document on Catholic schools, which urges them to follow the same pastoral path as the Diocese, which must be an instrument of pastoral care for the school and college.overall of theDiocese.

And I invited them to overcome differences and divisions and unite in such a difficult time, when the Church cannot appear disunited or rivalrous. They agreed to prepare a day of reflection on this aspect of unity. This was followed by studies on the ideology of the current educational reform seminar and other very useful aspects for the life of our schools.

At Mass time, in the morning and in the evening, at dinner time I had the opportunity to speak with Father Hernández Pico and Dr.EddieStein, with whom we are preparing a pastoral letter on "Christian Faith, the Church, and Political Engagement." This topic is becoming increasingly necessary to clarify the confusion that still prevails, even among clergy and faithful Christian laity.

Sunday, April 23, 1978.

The Mass of the Fifth Sunday of Easter, in the Cathedral, was packed as usual. In my homily, I presented the idea of the Risen Christ returning to his Church in the Spirit, and this Church is presented under the three figures that today's readings offer us: the house of God, in which Christ is the cornerstone, the foundation for all who build a Christian life, and the stumbling block for those who do not build their lives in a Christian way. The other figure is the People of God, with the precious qualifications that Saint Peter gives in his First Letter: "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a chosen race."

And the third idea and comparison is: the Church as communion, a community, which has its crises of disunity, like those narrated in the Book of Acts, between Greeks and Jews, but which is overcome in the sense of service, of the diaconate, of the first seven deacons, and of love, of prayer and faith, of the hierarchical community.

Monday, April 24, 1978.

Like every Monday, I dedicated myself to receiving the priests, who always arrive, and I enjoy chatting with them in a very intimate way.

That evening, in agreement with the seminary's formators, Father Gregorio Rosa, rector, and Father Abel Morán, prefect of studies, we dined at the Hospital of Divine Providence and discussed at length the seminary's problems, particularly those raised by Monsignor Aparicio in his partial communications to the Nunciature and the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. The fathers complained that they were never called upon to discuss these issues and that the formation team was bypassed to provide unrealistic information.

This is exactly the same problem I deplore, and I have received a letter from the Sacred Congregation criticizing me, in this regard, for the accusations made by Archbishop Aparicio. Both Archbishop Aparicio's letter, which accuses me of being guilty of a lack of discipline in the seminary, including the sowing of leftist ideas among the students, and the letter from the Sacred Congregation. We will develop a response based on the information I already have and, together with the seminary Fathers, we will bring justice to these false accusations.

Tuesday, April 25, 1978.

Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist. At the invitation of Father Zanconato, parish priest of San Marco, I went to celebrate the patronal Mass in that parish. The church was packed with faithful, who applauded me generously upon my arrival. In my homily, I thanked them for their welcome and tried to convey to them the thoughts and message of the Gospel of Saint Mark.focusing mainly onThese three ideas, which are like the foundations of the theology of St. Mark: first, that in his Gospel St. Mark makes the hour

of the world's salvation coincide with the kerygma, that is, with the announcement of the message of the Kingdom; conversion: "...do penance, for the kingdom of God has come."

The second theological thought of St. Mark is that the Kingdom of God is a mystery that Christ carries within his own personality and more than his doctrine and his miracles, St. Mark focuses on the personality of Christ himself, discovering his person, discovering him as the Messiah and as the Son of God, is the Kingdom of God; and the third thought is that this mystery is not understood by everyone and Christ tried to make it accessible with parables and other comparisons and that it becomes evident and clear only when he announces his passion to signify for us whoWe cannot understand the mystery of Christ the Messiah, Son of God, Kingdom of God, if we do not enter with Christ through the mystery of his passion, his cross, his humiliation.

Afterward, I spoke with several communities or congregations in the parish and congratulated Father on his parish work. I also extended my greetings to all the Franciscan Fathers of the Province of Venice, whose patron is St. Mark. May St. Mark protect the apostolic work that the Italian Franciscan Fathers have carried out in our Archdiocese.

On the other hand, the nuns who work in the parish communities have organized an expedition to the cantons of San Pedro Perulapán and informed me this afternoon of the desolation, anguish, despair, and fear that remain as a result of the violations of human dignity committed there by elements of the Army and the Security Forces, repressing every attempt at organization on the part of those poor peasants.

Wednesday, April 26, 1978.

A study lunch at the Seminary with the Justice and Peace Commission and representatives of the Presbyteral Senate. We stayed until 10:30 to study the upcoming pastoral letter, which will address the topic "Christian Faith and Political Engagement." It's a very well-written, yet very broad, study, and we agreed to summarize and organize it in a more practical and pastoral manner. This afternoon, we will meet with the principal authors of the letter.

Together with a worker and a seminarian, we prepared the radio interview that airs every Wednesday at 1:00 PM. The worker, naturally, focused his conversation on the upcoming Labor Day; the seminarian forwarded me some questions taken from letters sent in by radio listeners.

At noon, I hosted a lunch for the Curia secretaries, prepared at the Somasche Sisters' College, since today is Secretariat Day. It was a cordial meeting. I believe it was an encouragement for these humble and selfless workers.

In the afternoon, we received a visit from the Superior of the Maryknoll Sisters, who expressed her admiration for the pastoral ministry of our Archdiocese and her congratulations on the human rights defense carried out among us. I took the opportunity to thank them for the service their Maryknoll congregation provides in our diocese, and they promised to do their best to send more staff and open other communities.

I then met with Monsignor Urioste and Fathers Jerez and Juan Sobrino to discuss a new way to present the pastoral letter. It was a very constructive and profound dialogue,

and I believe we provided the pastoral guidelines for this document, which aims primarily to spread Christian principles and to guide, especially, the peasants in the face of the call of grassroots organizations and the danger of government repression and the use of the Church not for its own religious purposes, but for other purposes by the same groups.

I believe that a very clear document will be issued, I pray to God, in which the dignity of the Church and the clarity of doctrine will shine forth for those who receive it, for the glory of Our Lord.

In the evening, Nelly Rodríguez, a Sister of the Sacred Heart, visited me. She spoke about the problems facing the Educational Reform Seminary and the commitment Catholic schools will make to protect themselves from any manipulation by the Ministry of Education of this instrument of our people's culture: education, schools, and universities. Excellent Jesuit experts from the University of Cacao guide the Church's presence through the principals and teachers of our Catholic and parish schools.

Thursday, April 27, 1978.

This morning, a meeting of the Presbyteral Senate was held, where we discussed topics prompted by the correspondence I read to you, primarily an anonymous letter from a priest-not because it was anonymous, but because it offered food for thought. We took the initiative to convene a Senate meeting for open dialogue, thus preparing for a plenary meeting of the clergy where all the resentments, reluctances, and everything else that impedes more open unity among priests would be brought to light. This morning's Senate meeting presents many important details.

That evening, I celebrated the patronal feast of Our Lady of Montserrat in the neighborhood of the same name, together with the parish priest, Father Amado Molina, the vicar of that area, and the parish priest of El Calvario. I then visited Father Eliodoro Orellana in the Guadalupe neighborhood of Soyapango. He has been very ill and his health is deteriorating significantly; I left him an offering to help pay his medical expenses.

Friday, April 28, 1978.

In the afternoon, he met with workers from Cuts, a confederation of unions he invited, along with other priests experienced in worker ministry. The meeting was organized to better understand their unions and offer them the Christian vision of our Church. The meeting, though informal, was very enriching and sparked interest among the workers, who will continue to engage in dialogue with the priests.

At night,visit fromMr. Atilio Viéytez, who worked closely with the President of the previous Republic, Colonel Molina, a very enlightened and deeply Christian man, offered me his opinion on the situation of the Church. He feels supported by the current Church and offers it his unconditional support.

From Saturday 29 April to Saturday 20 May 1978.

.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

CHAPTER 3.

Year 1978.

Diary from May 21st to June 21st.

1978.

Sunday, May 21, 1978.

In the afternoon, I visited Ciudad Arce, where I had been invited for First Communion, but some disagreements arose with the parish priest, who had administered First Communion in the morning. In any case, what I was most interested in was bringing a message of unity to the entire Christian community, since there are difficulties there between the parish priest and the nun who promotes the basic communities. Therefore, after Mass, we had a very constructive meeting at the parish school, attended by the priest, Father Brizuela.and the religious and all the most direct collaborators of pastoral care.

Today's message from the Most Holy Trinity and the presentation of the specific circumstances of that place offered a wonderful opportunity to indirectly address the issue that concerned me, and I believe it was resolved in the sincere desire to always work together.

Monday, May 22, 1978.

I had lunch with the Jesuit community at the Church of Carmen, in Santa Tecla. It's a community composed primarily of elderly and highly experienced Jesuits. And I was delighted to hear that everyone agreed with the pastoral ministry and preaching I strive to carry out. They gave me great encouragement and I felt invaluable support, because they are very sensible, prudent, and experienced people.

Tuesday, May 23, 1978.

This morning I met with the Seminary Council and all the diocesan priests who work in the vicariates of La Asunción, Flor Blanca, and in the parishes in the areas of Miramonte, San Benito, and La Ceiba.

Discussing the issue of seminary formation from a pastoral perspective, since these diocesan priests of this vicariate have been called to form a sort of pastoral reflection council, we agreed that seminarians should be trained to be servants of the people, under the inspiration of the Church, in whatever environment they work. Therefore, these parish priests will be more involved in seminary life and will ensure that the seminarians collaborate with them in this very challenging area of pastoral care.

Because these are the areas where the richest people in our society live, but at the same time there are also marginalized and rural areas.

The replacement of Father Segura as rector of the Minor Seminary was also discussed, and it was agreed to ask the Jesuit Fathers for a replacement, giving preference to a Mexican priest who had previously worked at the seminary and who has great affection for this work, Father Himes. Only as a last resort would a diocesan priest be considered, which would be the best solution, provided there is sufficient clergy. But for now, we need the help of the Jesuit Fathers.

In the afternoon, I went to bless the façade and towers of the Iglesia del Carmen, in the department of Cuscatlán, where Father Miguelito Rodríguez, now elderly, and a parish team had successfully restored that picturesque church. I truly appreciated the welcoming atmosphere of that community.It's become more expensive to live always united with your parish priest and your bishop, that is, always feel with the Church.

Wednesday, May 24, 1978.

Feast of Mary Help of Christians. I celebrated Mass for the students of the Salesian schools in the morning. And in the afternoon, the parish Mass after the procession, both very solemn events that bring immense comfort to a deeply devout people.of the BlessedVirgin Mary, I expressed my congratulations and thanked the Salesian Fathers for cultivating these Marian sentiments among our people.

On the Wednesday program, the traditional interview, today I had Mr. Magaña, head of the Family Center, who is doing very well in the family ministry.

Today I also received a letter from the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, inviting me to travel to Rome to discuss the situation of our Archdiocese. I then met with my

spiritual director, Father Azcue, and my psychologist, Dr. Semsch, and they agreed on the magnificent opportunity the Holy See offers me to shed light, with the sincerity and good will with which I do so, on the pastoral work of this Archdiocese.

Thursday, May 25, 1978.

I had lunch with the Fathers of the Oratory of San Felipe Neri: Father Brito, Father Fernández Abad, Father Manuel Reyes, and Father Abrego. It's a community where I sensed a very priestly and fraternal atmosphere.

We remember Father Juanito García Artola, with whom I had a deep priestly friendship and who was the founder of this Oratory of San Felipe Neri, in the Colonia San Benito of San Salvador.

In the afternoon, a hearing was held at the Co-ed Rural School in the canton of Cojutepeque. They came to offer me the opportunity to put my name on their school and, if I accepted, to submit my resume. I explained my difficulties and the objections the government might raise. However, they insisted, and with great gratitude, I accepted, hoping to be informed of the Ministry of Education's decision in due course.

Another important audience this afternoon was the Electrical Industry Union, who came to ask for moral support for their demands regarding the Pension Fund. I promised them the assistance of the Legal Aid Office and everything else I could offer, within the limits of their needs.

This evening, the Commission for the Laity met, becoming a reflection committee for lay pastoral care. There is good will among the team members, and I believe it will be enriching to reflect with them on this very important sector of the Church: the laity.

I was unable to attend the Seminary's invitation to celebrate Corpus Christi this afternoon in such an original and solemn way. However, I did dine with its leaders and the Auxiliary Bishop who presided over the ceremony.

Friday, May 26, 1978.

A plenary meeting of the Episcopal Conference is being held to review the results of the study on the Puebla meeting. The diocesan reports have been compiled, with the Diocese of San Miguel missing. The most comprehensive and thorough study was that of the Archdiocese. After reviewing them, a summary will be prepared, including all the contributions from the faithful, religious, and priests. On behalf of all this people of God, the Episcopal Conference will send it so that Celam can prepare the basic document, which will be used at the October meeting in Puebla.

In the afternoon, I presided over the funeral of Francisco Martínez Saprissa. In my homily, I praised his sense of generosity and spiritual poverty, recalling that the poor are not only those who have nothing, but those who know how to have, according to God's will and the love of neighbor for which the deceased distinguished himself, and also because he was one of those of whom Christ said:

"Blessed are those who are not scandalized by me," he affirmed that many Christians today are scandalized by the Gospel in all its demands and would like a

preaching more suited to their tastes, and that Paco Martínez Saprissa understood these demands of the authentic Gospel; as a Cursillista de Cristianidad (Christian Cursillista), he preached these social and temporal implications of the Kingdom of God.

Without a doubt he had a prophetic vision of what preaching and evangelism mean in our time.

That evening, the Cursillos de Cristiandad Secretariat organized a dinner for me at Mrs. Julita de Núñez's home, where we discussed very interesting topics related to the lay apostolate and, in particular, the Cursillos de Cristiandad movement.

Saturday, May 27, 1978.

Breakfast with the Curia staff, Father Brito, Father Barrera, and Archbishop Urioste. Archbishop Revelo was absent. We discussed important issues, especially among the clergy. We studied Father Juan León Montoya's article, in which he criticizes the Archbishop. We agreed not to give it too much importance and expressed regret at his devotion to the government.

Sunday, May 28, 1978.

The Legion of Mary's "Acies" were held at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Numerous Legionaries attended, mainly from the capital, but also from other parishes in the diocese.

I commented on the pastoral value of devotion to the Virgin, as presented by the Pope in his exhortation Marianis Cultus.

In the afternoon, the feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated in the Cathedral. It was very beautiful. Representatives of the various communities participated in the procession in the park, a truly Eucharistic spectacle for the Church.

Monday, May 29, 1978.

Among the visits I would like to highlight that of Don Lencho Llach, Ambassador to the Holy See, for having insisted on the need for dialogue with the Government and for having expressed on my part, good will, but we were waiting for a reply to our letter, sent before Easter, as he himself knows.

Dr. Silva, a throat specialist, gave me orders to remain silent for two days, so I suspended all commitments for Tuesday and Wednesday.

Tuesday, May 30, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Wednesday, May 31, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Thursday, June 1, 1978.

I returned to preaching after two days of rest for my throat, and I'm happy to have dedicated my voice to the Holy Hour of the Eucharist in the Chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence. Many people attended.

Friday, June 2, 1978.

I welcomed the visit of Archbishop Pablo Vega of Nicaragua and Archbishop Rivera, with whom I spoke and we concluded on the advisability of a meeting of the bishops of Central America that would follow a line of accord with the new Church documents, to share concerns, especially regarding the upcoming meeting in Puebla. They asked me to invite them, and we agreed that, on the feast of the Divine Savior of the World, if possible, they would come to concelebrate and then dedicate a day to the indicated reflections.

In the afternoon, since today is the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I presided over the celebration in the Basilica, dedicated to the Sacred Heart. The immense church offered a beautiful spectacle, completely filled with the faithful, all in an attitude of prayer.

Saturday, June 3, 1978.

From eight to one in the afternoon we had a meeting with the school principalsCatholic andRepresentatives of parish schools. The Sacred Congregation for Education's exhortation on Catholic schools was discussed. The consciences of Catholic schools were deeply touched, feeling challenged by the question: are we truly evangelizing? This concern was raised with the promise of future coexistence along these same lines.

That evening, Father Gregorio Rosa, rector of the seminary, and I studied the necessary response to the letters from Archbishop Aparicio and the Sacred Congregation for Education, to address the serious accusations stemming from Archbishop Aparicio's reports, which have caused distrust in the Archbishopric and the seminary's formation team. Father Gregorio was absolutely right to suggest strong and scholarly responses in exchange for such superficial accusations, so inspired by Archbishop Aparicio's ill will.

Sunday, June 4, 1978.

After Mass in the Cathedral, accompanied by Mr. Salvador Barraza, I traveled to Guatemala to meet Father Juan Deplanck Lencho, who had come from Belgium and with whom I spoke for many hours that afternoon. He expressed great interest and joy in the situation of the Church in El Salvador. He assured me that many in Europe who had lost faith in the Church are recovering it thanks to evangelical attitudes, as seen in the Churches of Latin America. He urged me to always maintain this credibility that, thank God, the Church in El Salvador is reawakening.

That day also marked the beginning of the Central American Scout meeting in Guatemala. Unfortunately, I had to return due to numerous commitments in the Archdiocese, but I asked the auxiliary bishop to attend the Scout meeting in Guatemala. Unfortunately, he also didn't attend and didn't give advance notice, which made our presence seem very negative.hisSalvatore.

Monday, June 5, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Tuesday, June 6, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Wednesday, June 7, 1978.

As usual, we had breakfast and reflected on the situation of the Church and the country.

Thursday, June 8, 1978.

I had the pleasure of meeting again with Dr. Dárdano, a psychologist, with whom we discussed in depth the pastoral approach I had to adopt and which I must report to the Holy See. Dr. Dárdano's advice was, as always, very encouraging and guiding. I also discussed this with Dr. Rodolfo Semsch, who fully supports the Archdiocese's pastoral approach.

This afternoon I was in Zacamil, with Father Rogelio and his lay collaborators, a very beautiful pastoral reflection in which theyThey played theseCurrent issues mainly concern the Church's relations with popular organizations.

That evening I attended the Holy Hour of the Cursillo de Cristiandad (Christian Cursillo), while a group of men were in Planes de Renderos to begin the Cursillo de Cristiandad (Christian Cursillo), which would conclude next Sunday.

Friday, June 9, 1978.

Father Gonzalo López has returned and has been assigned to the parish of Comasagua, which he gladly accepted. The inauguration ceremony will be held next Thursday, presided over by Auxiliary Bishop Revelo.

In the afternoon, a meeting was held with the seminarians of the Major Seminary, with whom a dynamic of integration and collaboration was developed that resulted in numerous practical lessons.

Saturday, June 10, 1978.

We met with representatives of the Archbishop's Curia, including Archbishop Revelo, and discussed how the archdiocese will be governed during my 15-day absence to travel to Rome and report on our situation to the Holy See.

After the mass in the Cathedral,I chaired theThe consecration of the splendid church dedicated to Saint Anthony in Planes de Renderos by the Italian Franciscan Fathers was a deeply felt ceremony, both catechetical and liturgical. It was a great satisfaction for the pastor to share such a precious morning with such kind people.

The final evening of the Mass was also a time of great pastoral satisfaction.short courses TheThe ladies who listened to my homily on the radio this morning from the Cathedral expressed their solidarity and their encouragement to continue, with the Archdiocese, a pastoral approach in line with the Church's modern mentality.

Sunday, June 11, 1978.

After the mass in the cathedral,I chaired theThe consecration of the splendid church dedicated to Saint Anthony in Planes de Renderos by the Italian Franciscan Fathers was a deeply moving ceremony. The pastor was deeply pleased to share such a precious morning with such kind people.

The final evening of the Mass was also a time of great pastoral satisfaction.Short courses TheThe ladies who listened to my homily on the radio this morning in the Cathedral expressed their solidarity and their encouragement to continue, with the Archdiocese, a line of pastoral care in line with the modern mentality of the Church.

Monday, June 12, 1978.

Early in the morning, as per yesterday's invitation, the young Franciscans studying philosophy came to meet me. They asked me some very interesting questions. I later learned that they were very impressed and considered the interview a true lesson in modern pastoral care. I'm delighted!

That evening, representatives of FAPU, a grassroots organization, came to express their desire to help the Church, but I gave them a strong warning: "Without the risk of manipulating it." They agreed and said they would provide assistance, aid, and support to the Church only because, while respecting its autonomy and independence from any political group, they understood that the Church is a great guide and a stimulus for the people's liberation struggle.

I have insisted much on the autonomy of the Church and on how the Church, in its evangelical perspective, agrees with and supports all initiatives that aim at justice, well-being and peace for all men.

Tuesday, June 13, 1978.

On this feast of Saint Anthony, I was unable to attend the patronal feast in Soyapango, but I asked the auxiliary bishop to be present because he was chairing the Senate meeting at the Somasca Sisters' house. The meeting proved both very useful and very challenging. At the Somasca house, I also received a visit from the Italian ambassador.

While the Senate was in session, the Italian Ambassador met with me. I met with him and expressed his desire to collaborate with the Church, as he professes to be Catholic. He is an Italian member of the Christian Democrats, about which he spoke to me at length, comparing it to the party of the same name here in El Salvador and suggesting that a well-organized Christian Democrat would be of great assistance to the political and social ideals of the Church's doctrine.

Wednesday, June 14, 1978.

The first visit this morning was that of the President of the Legislative Assembly, who professes to be Catholic and offers his services to the Church unconditionally. He wishes to best serve his country in this important role.I spoke,I expressed the Church's position, its desires, and its fears toward the government simply and frankly. He expressed his desire to act as an intermediary whenever the Church wished to avail itself of his services, providing the services he offers unconditionally as a Catholic.

In the afternoon, I spent some pleasant moments with the Somascan Seminary near La Ceiba. I celebrated Mass with the Directors, and then, over dinner, we shared our concerns, inviting them to dialogue and raising some very interesting questions. The youthful concern for staying up-to-date on the Church's pastoral work is evident. With some pleasant numbers and profound reflections, the minutes passed quickly.

Several priests from the diocese of San Vicente, suspended by their bishop, were waiting for me at the Hospital of Divine Providence to take advantage of my trip to Rome and ask for support.

Naturally, I offered to do everything in my power in this painful situation, with fraternal charity. Archbishop Aparicio has been in Rome since Friday.

Or forgotten, I remember that last Friday I paid a courtesy visit to the Nuncio, who was very attentive and cordial.

Thursday, June 15, 1978.

In the Curia, several priests and nuns came to wish me well on my trip to Rome.

Very nice things from the lay communities and also from communities that are not part of the Diocese, who send greetings to the Holy Father. The community of La Palma, where he organized "Seme di Dio" workshops, sent the Holy Father traditional objects, as well as letters from the Archdiocese's major seminarians and some lay people. It's touching how much our people love the Holy Father.

Privately, I've been busy organizing my travel needs and making plans for my trip. Tomorrow, Friday, at eight o'clock, I have to be at the airport to board the Iberia flight to Spain and Rome. I'm counting on many prayers. I've been assured of a close spiritual bond with my priests, men and women religious, and the faithful, and I hope this communion with the Holy Father will be of great benefit to our Church.

Friday, June 16, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Saturday, June 17, 1978.

At eight in the morning, some priests and several friends showed up at the airport to say goodbye. I was traveling with Monsignor Rivera and Monsignor Urioste. The trip was very pleasant: an hour's flight to San José, Costa Rica, then four hours to San Juan,Puerto Rico,and finally seven hours to Madrid. In Madrid, after a stop of about three hours, we arrived in Rome in three hours.

The Oblate Sisters of Divine Love were waiting for us because Mother Scarglietti had sent word from San Salvador, a gesture for which I am deeply grateful. We were staying at the Pensionato Romano and, after a rest-it was Saturday noon-we went to visit the Church of San Pietro in the afternoon.

At the tomb of the first Pope, I prayed intensely for the unity of the Church, for the Pope, for the bishops, and for the entire universal Church, especially for our Archdiocese, entrusting to Saint Peter the interests of our Church and the success of this dialogue with the Holy See.

We then visited the Jesuit Generalate, where we were able to greet the Superior General, Father Pedro Arrupe, who was very kind and generous to us.offers all the services of the Society of Jesus. He indicated some priests with whom we could speak and who could provide the necessary assistance.

We returned to the Pensionato where a deep sleep and a good night's sleep restored us.the change of the hour, which upheavals, certainly, poor human nature.

Sunday, June 18, 1978.

We celebrated Mass at the Pensionato with an Indian priest and, after breakfast, we went to coordinate some aspects of the meetings in Rome with the Jesuit Procurator. It was a very interesting conversation, which explored aspects of theology, pastoral care, diplomacy, and relations between the Holy See and the particular Churches. It was a true lesson in practical pastoral practice that we were very interested in and provided us with considerable insights for our ad limina visit, particularly regarding our diocese's specific relationship with the Holy See and its traditional methods of proceeding.

We set out at the same time as the immense crowd that every Sunday at noon awaits the Pope's appearance on his balcony to pray to the Angelus with him was gathering in St. Peter's Square. The Holy Father directed, "First," a few words dedicated

today to the Christian meaning of life. That, amid all the current tribulations, Christians must have great faith, great strength, great optimism, fully trusting that God cares for human lives and the course of history.

We also saw the Pope on television last night, in a magnificent concert held in the Audience Hall, attended by numerous cardinals, bishops, priests, religious, and faithful. The Pope appears very clear-headed and also quite agile in his physical life, despite his 81 years. He gives us a lot...confidence in finding aRome, a pastor of the Church with much experience, much wisdom, and, above all, much love for God and for humanity.

In the afternoon, visit to the tomb of St. Paul, in his Extra ChurchMuros EraAt the hour of vespers, the Basilica was completely illuminated. One could hear the organ filling the air and the choir of the monks, whom they sing InGregorian chant. Kneeling beside the tomb of the Apostle to the Gentiles, the great Saint Paul, in that prayerful, almost heavenly atmosphere, I felt all those emotions of my days as a student, and now as a priest, revive in my memory, in my heart, in my love.

My visits to Rome have always been a source of inspiration and strength for my prayers before these tombs of the Apostles, especially this afternoon, when I feel that my visit is not simply a private visit of piety, but that in making my ad limina visit I bring with me all the interests, concerns, problems, hopes, plans, and anxieties of all my priests, religious communities, parishes, and grassroots communities-that is, of an entire Archdiocese that comes to prostrate itself with me, as yesterday before the tomb of Saint Peter and today before the tomb of Saint Paul.

Monday, June 19, 1978.

The main work today was the organization of interviews or audiences with the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, which indicated to us tomorrow Tuesday morning; with the Secretariat of State, where we deliver the documentation and promised to tell us when we would have received; with the Audience Office to verify whether a private audience was possible, but the time taken to prepare the Holy Father's celebrations, combined with his health difficulties, have significantly reduced the number of private audiences, even if they have given us hope for a very special audience after the general audience next Wednesday.

In the Sacred Congregation for Bishops we were told that we had spoken withMonsignor Miguel Buro, with whom we spoke at length, noted a series of concepts and prejudices in his mind that left us with little hope of understanding the pastoral care our Archdiocese is providing. However, the conversation was very useful for expressing our views in the few moments he allowed us, since he was almost the only one speaking.

In the afternoon and evening, we enjoyed the wonderful atmosphere of Rome, free from official commitments or duties, which in June begins to get a little warmer. The climate is very similar to that of El Salvador.

During the night we were also visited by Father Juan Bosco Estrada, a Mexican Jesuit, who told us that he was going for a walk after dinner through St. Peter's Square, from where we contemplated the famous little window where the Holy Father studies and prays for all humanity.

Tuesday, June 20, 1978.

The main interview was with Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops. I have written a description of this interview, which was of great importance to me, as far as I can remember, in recording my responses to the Cardinal's observations on my pastoral work. I believe I have successfully refuted much inaccurate information, which, rather, stems from interests contrary to those I seek to defend in the pastoral activity and preaching of the Archdiocese. I recommend you read the confidential transcript of this interview with the Cardinal.

In the afternoon, we received the news that the Holy Father would receive Archbishop Rivera and me in a special audience after the general audience. In the evening, we were invited to dinner by the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love. The atmosphere was very cordial, and we have fond memories of the work of this congregation in San Salvador, at the Colegio de la Sagrada Familia, and of the Archdiocese, in the direct pastoral field of the city of Citalá, Chalatenango.

Also on this day, I had the opportunity to personally greet a great friend of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Archbishop De Nicoló, director of seminaries in Latin America. I gave him the correspondence containing my response to the false information received from the Congregation regarding the Archdiocese's relationship with the San José de la Montaña Interdiocesan Seminary.

Monsignor De Nicoló demonstrated to me his very priestly and intimate friendship, giving me some confidential warnings and advising me to be very frank in the dialogue with the Cardinal, which we would have the following day.

Wednesday, June 21, 1978.

The general audience and the special audience with the Holy Father filled this unforgettable morning. It is June 21st, and the main reminder at the general audience is that today marks 15 years since that June 21st when Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini was elected to succeed Saint Peter, taking the name Paul VI. This occasion brought immense joy to the vast audience, speaking in all languages, who, through their interpreters, expressed their affection, prayers, and support for the successor of Saint Peter. The Pope, responding to this outpouring of love, affirmed that the commemorated election signified for him an absolute dedication to the People of God.

And in the name of this dedication, his message was inspired by a task that has been the responsibility of pontiffs throughout history: to make the beauty of the Church visible despite the human traits and personal shortcomings of the pontiffs. He referred in particular to the Church's great mission among humanity to sow unity, peace, and happiness in Christ. He exhorted those present to be Christians who are very faithful to the Church and to faithfully live the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, which are a true gift of the Holy Spirit for our time.

At the end of the audience, the Holy Father called the bishops present, we were about eight, to share with him we imparted theThe crowd blessed us. We were then led into a private room where we awaited the moving moment of a more intimate conversation with His Holiness Paul VI.

When our turn came, we entered the small room where the Pope was, and we welcomed him with the emotion such moments evoke. The Pope had us sit on either side of him and, addressing me in particular, he shook my right hand and held it in both his hands for a long moment. I also shook the Pope's hand with both hands. I wanted a photograph of that moment, one that would express the intimate communion of a bishop with the center of Catholic unity. And holding my hands in this way, he spoke to me at length.

It would be difficult for me to repeat his lengthy message word for word, because besides not being concise, but rather cordial, broad, and generous, the emotion of the moment makes it difficult to remember it word for word. But the dominant ideas of those words were these: "I understand your difficult work. It is a work that may not be understood; it requires great patience and great strength. I know that not everyone thinks as you do; it is difficult under the circumstances of your country to achieve such unanimity of thought. However, proceed with courage, with patience, with strength, with hope."

He promised me that he would pray a lot for me and my diocese. And that he would do everything he could to foster unity. If he could personally help in any way, he would gladly do so.

Then he referred to the people. He said he had known them since he worked at the Secretariat of State, about 50 years ago, and that they are generous and hardworking people who today are suffering greatly and demanding their rights. He told me that we had to help them, work for them, but never with hatred or by inciting violence, but with great love.

To make them feel the value of their suffering, to preach peace, and to make those people understand how much the Pope loves them and how he prays and works for them. He also spoke of difficulties that can only be overcome with love: difficulties with the dominant forces, difficulties with collaborators, not all of whom understand the effort made.

I reiterated that this was exactly how I tried to preach, proclaiming love, inviting conversion. I told him that we had often repeated his message for the World Day of Peace: "No to violence, yes to peace." I expressed my unwavering commitment to the Magisterium of the Church. And that, in my denunciations of the violence in the country, I had always called for conversion and shown compassion for those suffering, for the families of the victims, and, at the same time, I denounced sin. He called sinners to convert. The Pope reiterated that he would pray for us much and that we should tell him what he could do to help us.

Then he turned to Monsignor Rivera, also offering words of encouragement. Finally, he said, "Let's take a photograph." And the photographer came in to do us this favor from the Holy Father, which was our great desire: to have photographic witnesses of that unforgettable moment.

I regret not remembering the words better, but they were essentially what I said. It left me with the satisfaction of a confirmation of my faith, of my service, of my joy in working and suffering with Christ, for the Church and for our people. I believe that this moment alone would be enough to repay every effort made in coming to Rome: finding comfort in communion with the Pope, being enlightened by his guidance.

Naturally, the Pope himself indicated that they will have to deal with the Sacred Congregation, in particular, he mentioned the Secretariat of State, Monsignor Casaroli, who will be the one to speak with me, when the Secretariat of State's audience is scheduled for me, because the Pope, in his brief message, I felt was very well informed about the situation and wanted us to discuss the specific problems in more depth with the various secretariats.

But his word, which is fundamental to this communion, is a word of hope, of encouragement and, as I said, it confirmed my desire to serve our people with love from the Church of Jesus Christ.

During this audience, I presented the Holy Father with a portrait of Father Navarro, sent by his brother Napoleon, as well as objects from the workshops of "La semilla de Dios" in La Palma, Chalatenango, and letters from various communities; as well as a gift from San Miguel sent by Francisco González.

I left a reminder in a confidential envelope.

I left the Holy Father a reminder, in the form of a short letter, in which I stated that I had already visited the various dicasteries of His Holiness and explained how difficult it was to carry out the archbishop's ministry in the current situation in my country, while striving to remain faithful to the current Magisterium of the Church. I also told him that the information I had received in Rome was supported by documents and publications that reflected this situation and, at the same time, defamed the Church or expressed solidarity with the Archbishop.

Testimonies come from everywhere, especially from the people I'm tasked with guiding. And all of this encourages me to continue my pastoral work as I do today.

I also want to tell you that I regret that the observations that some secretariats have made about my pastoral conduct seem to show that a negative criterion prevails, which coincides exactly with the very powerful forces there, in my Archdiocese, that seek to hinder and discredit my apostolic efforts.

But, he concluded, telling him that you can be assured, Holy Father, of my fidelity as the successor of Peter and my unconditional adherence to his teachings; for in this fidelity and adherence I have always found the secret and guarantee of walking with my flock in search of the Spirit of the Lord. I later saw this letter among the papers that Archbishop Casaroli brought with him to speak with me during the dialogue or audience at the Secretariat of State, and I noted that, at the bottom of my letter, there were several letters, undoubtedly from the Holy Father, containing some observations that Archbishop Casaroli should have taken into account when speaking with me.

ThisOn the same afternoon of June 21, as agreed with Father Pedraz, we will contact him by telephone to communicate my impressions and my activities in Rome in a recording, which was undoubtedly broadcast on Radio Ysax that Wednesday, June 21.

CHAPTER 4.

Year 1978.

Diary from June 22nd to July 3rd.

1978.

Thursday, June 22, 1978.

This morning we have an audience with the Sacred Congregation for Education. Cardinal Garrone was present in person, along with his secretary, Monsignor Antonio Javierre, and another monsignor. We were explained the origin of the two letters received via the Nunciature regarding the issue of the Archbishopric and the Seminary. A summary of this audience was prepared by Monsignor Urioste, who was present, as was Monsignor Rivera Damas. The discussion was based on the letter I addressed in response to the Sacred Congregation on June 5th, which I personally brought.

In the archive, it is possible to consult both this response letter of June 5 to Cardinal Garrone, as well as the brief report that Monsignor Urioste wrote regarding this audience.

I must say that our clarification was very helpful, because there were many distortions of the truth regarding the relationship between the Archbishopric, the Curia, and the functioning of the Seminary of San José de la Montaña. We learned of very unpleasant facts that had been reported behind our backs, and there had even been a request for an apostolic visitation of the Seminary and the Archbishopric. Not even the Sacred Congregation deemed it appropriate to do so. Thank God!

We hope that after these clarifications there will be greater respect for the life of the Archbishop's Curia of San Salvador.AlreadyThe property currently owned by him at the Seminary of San José de la Montaña, which, as has been demonstrated, physically belongs, as a building, to the Archdiocese of San Salvador. This does not negate the goal of establishing an archdiocese independent of the Seminary, when necessary.

The Sacred Congregation for Education has been well informed of our good will and of the difficulties, sometimes emergencies, that arise in the life of the Diocese and which naturally affect the Seminary, which is part of the life of the Archdiocese.

We then visited Monsignor Maximino Romero, secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy.

It was a very broad and comprehensive conversation, offering numerous guidelines for our relationships with the priests. I also spoke to him about the Quezaltepeque problem, and he promised to send me a statement on the situation of the usurper, Father Quinteros. We also discussed the issue of the ten suspended priests, speaking on their behalf, and he told me that instructions had already been given to the bishop of San Vicente to resolve the matter.

At noon, we went to the Secretariat for Justice and Peace, the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, in the Palazzo di San Callisto in Trastevere. We spoke at length with the secretary, a French monsignor who is very knowledgeable about the social situation and the injustices and abuses in our country. He gave us very valuable insights during that conversation, during which he showed great interest in our situation.

Friday, June 23, 1978.

It was left to personal work, since in addition to the common problems that we all have, each of us also has our own particular problems, and therefore this day, Friday, was set aside for this purpose.

Saturday, June 24, 1978.

The Oblate Sisters of Divine Love, who cared so attentively for us during our stay in Rome, offered us a pleasant stroll in Tivoli, which kept us occupied all day. Those picturesque fountains, that natural setting, that reminder of so much history, are a true spiritual relief amid the challenges facing our pastoral care. On our return, we went to Piazza Navona, a typical Roman square, for a cappuccino, as they call coffee with milk in Rome.

On the way to Tivoli, we stopped to visit the Basilica of St. John Lateran; it was his day, June 24th. Perozzi's solemn Second Pontifical Mass was being sung. It brought back so many memories of that choir, that organ, and that light shining on the mosaics of the ancient Basilica. And that crowd, modern humanity, moving across the centuries, in an ever-present present in the Church. A moment to reflect and be enthusiastic, and to be humble and faithful servants of the Church. St. John Lateran is the Pope's cathedral and the Mother Church of all the Churches.

Sunday, June 25, 1978.

At noon, we went to St. Peter's Square to pray to the Angelus with the Pope. Before this prayer to the Virgin, the Pope mentioned the touching story of an 11-year-old Italian boy named Mauro (I don't remember his last name). After witnessing his fifteen-year-old brother kidnapped, he offered himself to the kidnappers in his brother's place because he was ill. Nothing has been heard since April because the ransom demanded is so high that the family cannot afford it.

Even the Mother offered herself. And the Pope spoke out against this ingratitude, simultaneously expressing his solidarity with the family and offering words of encouragement and admiration to little Mauro, whom the Pope called "a little lamb of goodness," standing in contrast to the wickedness of humanity. I was filled with satisfaction at the Pope's denunciation, because my way of preaching coincides with this gesture of understanding human suffering. I thank God for having found here a new motivation to continue my pastoral work.

At noon, the Ambassador of El Salvador to the Holy See, Mr. Prudencio Llach, hosted us for lunch at the Grand Hotel where he is staying.

In the afternoon, we had a very broad audience with Father Arrupe, Superior of the Jesuits, with whom we discussed the steps taken in Rome and our situation in El Salvador. He is fully aware that there are very different currents in the Church and that we must be conscious of following what our conscience tells us, seeking to keep the Pope well informed of our actions and intentions.

He has extensive experience with the often misinterpreted Jesuit works, an experience that has also helped us find serenity in times of misunderstanding and difficulty. He is a man of great holiness, and it is clear that the Spirit of God enlightens him to have such an open and understanding spirit at this time. He has once again offered us the full cooperation of the Jesuits, as we are indeed receiving.

Monday, June 26, 1978.

At the invitation of Archbishop Miguel Tumore of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, I attended a meeting with him, the secretary of that Congregation. I gave him my letter of acceptance to travel as a special guest to Puebla. I also brought him the report I wrote for Cardinal Baggio on the interview we had last week. Archbishop Buro emphasized his well-known concepts of prudence and "merely evangelical" preaching.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, we had an appointment with Cardinal Pironio. It was a pleasure to meet this great friend of the Latin American bishops, recently elevated to the position of Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Religious. He maintained the same spirit of simplicity and humility, of friendly welcome, with which he wisely responded to the various questions we posed about religious life and women religious in parish work. This is what he was referring to when he said that women religious, as long as they fulfill these three objectives: love for Jesus Christ, fidelity to their charisms, and a service well-suited to the particular Church in which they work, are fully developing their vocation.

I also asked him about current events in the Church and the bishops' meeting in Puebla. He gave us the open-minded answer he has always given us. Cardinal Pironio, as

he greeted us, said, when I told him I was being accused of being an instrument of communism in Latin America: "I'm not surprised, given that they even published a book called Pironio, Incendiary." So it's a legacy for all those who want to preach social justice and progress in our Latin America.

Monsignor Rivera and Monsignor Urioste also went to the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments to consult specifically on Confirmation, where Monsignor Urioste issued a brief memorandum.

That evening, at six thirty, Monsignor Casaroli received us in the Secretariat of State. Monsignor Urioste also wrote a brief account of this very interesting conversation, to which I refer for brevity. Monsignor Rivera, Monsignor Urioste, the Ambassador to the Holy See, and myself were present.

Tuesday, June 27, 1978.

Just a private visit to Monsignor De Nicoló, who, as I said before, is a great friend and with whom we have now discussed, in a very private and confidential manner, several aspects that have been very useful to me.

Wednesday, June 28, 1978.

Since I already had no particular commitments, I spent the morning returning to the Holy Father's general audience, mingling with the crowd. I was delighted to feel like one of those Christians who, from different nations around the world, eagerly awaited the

Pope's arrival. Being the eve of St. Peter's Day, the audience was large and joyful. Before the Pope's arrival, chants in every language could be heard, and upon his arrival, the thunderous applause was enormous. The Pope referred to St. Peter, his tomb, his Basilica, and how all of us Christians are there, very close to the foundational rock of the Church. He invited us to be faithful to that Church.

I took home the items I purchased as souvenirs, with the Holy Father's blessing. In the afternoon, I received a visit from Mother María Castro Llerena, who assured me that my request to found a community of Adorers there was progressing and that, after the foundation in Panama, already underway, it would be the turn of El Salvador.

After the visit of Mother Llerena and the Mother Superior General of the Oblates, I went to St. Peter's while they were singing Vespers for the patron saints of St. Peter and St. Paul. Both are patrons of Rome.

Here too, the solemn singing of Vespers, in a festive atmosphere, a universal assembly that filled the Basilica's choir, evoked many memories. And there, next to the tomb of St. Peter,recently theThe Apostles' Creed asks the Lord for fidelity and clarity to believe and preach the same faith as the Apostle Saint Peter.

In the evening, our evening walk with Father Juan Bosco Estrada took place around St. Peter's Square, recalling so many historical events that the names of Peter and Paul in Rome evoke.

Thursday, June 29, 1978.

Preparing for the return journey. Visit to St. Peter's. The solemn morning Mass is impressive, with a throng of people filling the square and surrounding streets: a true patronal feast, but with a universal character. Just as in our cities, patronal feasts bring together people from all the neighboring cantons and villages, this feast of St. Peter is ecumenical. Instead of cantons and villages, here we see people from every country in the world.

But the spirit is the same: a popular celebration, a joyful celebration, animated by Christian faith and hope, by sales, purchases, the comings and goings of people, by joy; which comes from being in touch with those heroes who already conquer and reign in eternity, while we walk on pilgrimage, seeking to imitate their example.

At night, I exit at the airport and I'm returning to my country. Despite returning home, I feel homesick. I left Rome. Rome is the home of those who have faith and a sense of the Church. Rome is the homeland of all Christians. There is the Axis, Who is the true Father of all. I felt so close to Him; I am so grateful because my heart, my faith, my spirit continue to be nourished by this rock, where the unity of the Church is so palpable.

Tomorrow, June 30, the fifteenth anniversary of the Pope's coronation, we will be busy traveling, returning home, unpacking, and so on. Rome will always be a Mother, a teacher, a homeland in our hearts.

Thursday, June 30, 1978.

This day dawned for me at Madrid airport. Last night, from eight to eleven in the evening,air travel fromRome to Madrid. At two in the morning,Startto San Juan, Puerto Rico; San José, Costa Rica; and El Salvador. The immensely long night on the ocean. An uneventful voyage, with so many reflections in our minds, so many resolutions in our hearts; we return, after having been in such close communication with the Pope and the Holy See, to our seat entrusted to us by Providence. We are gathering impressions, discussions, and recommendations; all the good that the Pope and Rome bestow on a bishop who wishes to remain faithful to the unity of the universal Church.

The long night of the journey begins on the coasts of Latin America, and around nine in the morning we arrive at Ilopango airport, where a crowd of friendly people greets me with applause and greetings. I interview journalists to explain how satisfying my trip to Rome was and to send greetings to all those who use these means of communication, including a radio station in Guatemala.

Bishop Revelo, auxiliary bishop, is among the friends who have come to greet me and informs me that a Mass is being prepared in the Cathedral to welcome me and for me to greet the people. I head toward the Cathedral, celebrate, and, at the Gospel, Bishop Revelo welcomes us with very ecclesiastical words, and I respond by sharing my impressions of Rome, encouraging us to work, to continue building this Church, and thanking the Pope for his words of encouragement. Confirmed in my work, in my hope, in my ideals, I invite everyone to celebrate this Holy Mass together to begin a new chapter in our pastoral life.

This sermon was broadcast on the radio; this homily was repeated on several programs today and the following day.

Friday, July 1, 1978.

I'm trying to synchronize this change in weather, which is disrupting my sleep and work life. Tomorrow morning I will deliver the letters I've been carrying from religious to religious to the communities of our Archdiocese. Among these, I visited Betania de Santa Tecla; the Oblates of Divine Love; La Sagrada Familia School; and the parish.Central America FathersJosephites, Jesuit Fathers. I had the pleasure of personally conveying to all these communities the greetings of their religious residing in Rome.

In the afternoon I preached the Holy Hour, which is celebrated on the first of every month in the Expiatory Chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence.

Sunday, July 2, 1978.

The Mass in the Cathedral was offered in homage to the Pope, and priests, nuns, and, above all, lay people from all the communities of the Archdiocese filled the Cathedral to capacity, even occupying the choir stalls. It was a splendid response to the invitation to celebrate Pope Francis's day. I shared my impressions of my trip to Rome. I expressed my commitment to the journey we are embarking on with the Archdiocese.

I tried to leave an impression of strength in faith, hope, love, and fidelity to the Pope. The people applauded the homily, and there was also a very affectionate round of applause as we entered and exited the Cathedral. Blessed be God for the love our people feel for their pastors!

Monday, July 3, 1978.

Among the visits, I think the most impressive today was that of Mrs. Matsumoto, the Japanese woman kidnapped in May and of whom nothing is known. Played by the director of the Insinca textile factory, she expressed her desire for me to help her find her husband and mention him in one of my homilies. I offered to write a diary entry, and she thought it was a great idea. She said that, although she isn't a Christian...

Mrs. Matsumoto said that, although she wasn't a Christian, she wanted to pray with me for her husband. I introduced her to Mother Luz, who spoke comforting words to her, and together we went to recite the prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the hospital chapel. I prayed with great trust.in itPlease, please, solve this problem of Mrs. Matsumoto.

From Tuesday 4 July to Saturday 30 September 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

CHAPTER 5.

Year 1978.

Diary from October 1st to December 5th.

1978.

Sunday, October 1, 1978.

The previous cassette, number 3, had only the first side recorded and covers the period from June 21st to July 4th. This diary ends there due to circumstances, perhaps my own fault. I wish I could.to compensate for this emptiness between July 4th and the day we begin, October 1st, 1978.

This is Sunday, October 1st. I celebrated Mass in the Cathedral. In my homily, I highlighted my weekly activities, particularly visiting various communities and recounting the fervent religious life of our Diocese, as well as other ecclesial activities; among these, the roundtable organized by the Catholic University to discuss my third pastoral letter and the first from Archbishop Rivera. I also denounced the abuses that occurred at the National University and, most importantly, the disappearance of an Anda employee, a neighbor of the University, who was captured by university security guards. They beat him and have since reported him missing.

I also denounced the ongoing repression, especially in the rural areas of San Pedro Perulapán and Cinquera, and the disappearance of a young woman, shot in a Nicaraguan neighborhood and taken to the hospital. She was monitored by the police, who then took her to an unknown location.

After the Mass in the Cathedral, I attended a celebration inPlandel Pino, under the jurisdiction of the Parish of San Sebastián in Ciudad Delgado. The Spanish Carmelite missionary nuns work in this community ofPlandel Pino. They also oversee the Salvadoran Polyclinic and work in La Laguna, in the department of Chalatenango. It was an extremely moving experience. A group of young people had been prepared to receive Confirmation, and, naturally, the main part of the liturgy was dedicated to them.

But I also met several groups organized by the nuns who promote a truly admirable pastoral ministry. A youth group, a Family of God group, a catechists group, a women's group from the Blessed Sacrament Guard; it's a beautiful combination of piety and advocacy.

I congratulated the nuns and their collaborators during a pleasant ceremony that took place after Mass. The crowd that welcomed me and attended the Mass was very large, and there was great warmth and welcome for the nuns and the bishop.

In the afternoon, at the Archbishop's Palace, we interviewed Father Moreno and Bachelor Cuéllar to question one of the disappeared who had escaped from prison. He revealed to us the horrific things that happen in the secret prisons of the security forces, where, undoubtedly, many of the people we mourn are held. This is a very sensitive secret; a truly terrifying revelation!

That evening, I celebrated Holy Hour at Divine Providence Hospital and then went out to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the birth of Father Samuel Orellana, parish priest of Ayutuxtepeque. It was also a very pleasant event, organized by a community that feels great affection and gratitude for its parish priest.

Monday, October 2, 1978.

The morning was dedicated to sharing with the group of priests from various dioceses who meet monthly at the minor seminary of San José de la Montaña. I had been asked to present to them the genesis and theological foundations of the Third Pastoral Letter. I noticed great interest among the dear priests because, after my presentation, which I tried to keep brief, a discussion began in which most of the group participated. The only reason it didn't continue was the time limit around noon. However, they promised to meet in groups to reflect on everything we had discussed and, at the next meeting, they will share the results of their insights and group discussions with me.

I also invited them, in response to a question they asked me, to dedicate one of their sessions, which I would like to attend, to the problem of the seminary and of priests who do not want to take the archdiocese's pastoral line seriously.

I had lunch with Father Luis Armijo, whom I greeted yesterday. He was the director of the Family Prayer Crusade when it was held here in El Salvador, and he has great affection for us. He had received a recommendation from several Latin American bishops to request funding from Adveniat to promote this Prayer Crusade in several Latin American countries.

By telephone, the secretary of the Nunciature, who was traveling from Guatemala, consulted me regarding the celebration of the Holy Father's funeral. I told him that the Archdiocese would celebrate it next Tuesday, or tomorrow, with the participation of all the clergy, and I invited him. He agreed to come, and regarding the consultation, I told him that I could follow the Nuncio's custom of celebrating at his Nunciature, but that I

would recommend avoiding so much publicity, as the government appears more interested in newspaper publicity than in prayer and homage to the Holy Father. The secretary thanked me and said he would take my comment into consideration.

Today, like every first Tuesday, the clergy meeting was held, also attended by numerous nuns involved in direct pastoral ministry. The topic of study was the Third Pastoral Letter. A very original and interesting note was that the first part was presented by two nuns. The doctrinal section and conclusions were presented by Father Fabián. The discussion was very interesting, and many concepts were clarified and explored in depth. The meeting concluded at 11:30 a.m. for the 12:15 p.m. Mass in the Cathedral, celebrated in suffrage for the eternal repose of His Holiness John Paul I. The Cathedral was completely packed with nuns and faithful.

In my homily, I highlighted these three concepts in honor of the Holy Father, since during his brief pontificate, he was a luminous response from God, highlighting these three concepts of the Church: its hierarchical sense. God has intensely called us to reflect on the pontificate, with the deaths of two popes and two elections; but the hierarchical sense is subordinated to service to the Church, just as the Church is subordinated to service to the Kingdom of God and the entire world. Therefore, the second aspect, hierarchy and Church, must be, above all, Christian.

And it is here that Pope John Paul II left us his great teaching: his humility, his poverty, his detachment from vanities, the certainty of his doctrine, a discipline based less on legalism than on conviction and love: these are expressions of a Pope at the pinnacle of the hierarchy at the service of the Church, but above all of a Christian who, like Paul, can say: "Imitate me as I imitate Jesus Christ." And from here comes the third note, the Marian aspect. I emphasized the affection the Pope showed for the Virgin Mary and

concluded by reading the short message the Pope addressed to the Third Marian Congress in Ecuador, his only radio message addressed to Latin America.

That evening, I attended the Mass of the Franciscan Fathers in the Parish of Concepción, on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. In my homily, I introduced Saint Francis as a Catholic and explained the structure of the Church, with its human shortcomings in the hierarchy. Then, secondly, Saint Francis is a Christian, the hierarchical Church at the service of Christianity. And that is why it must express holiness and a sense of the Gospel in all its structures. And Saint Francis offers us the example of a truly Christian Catholic. And from there, my third thought: the complete man, Saint Francis, being an authentic Christian, is also a fully developed, joyful, broad-minded man, etc.

Tuesday, October 3, 1978.

Today, as every first Tuesday, the clergy meeting was held, also attended by numerous nuns involved in direct pastoral ministry. The topic of study was the Third Pastoral Letter. A very original and interesting note was that the first part was presented by two nuns. The doctrinal part and conclusions were presented by Father Fabián.

The discussion was very interesting, and many concepts were clarified and explored in depth. The meeting concluded at 11:30 a.m. for the 12:15 p.m. Mass in the Cathedral, celebrated in suffrage for the eternal repose of His Holiness John Paul I. The Cathedral was packed with nuns and faithful.

In my homily, I highlighted these three concepts in honor of the Holy Father: how his brief pontificate was a luminous response from God, highlighting these three concepts of the Church: Its hierarchical significance: God has intensely called us to reflect on the pontificate, with the deaths of two Popes and two elections; but the hierarchical significance is subordinated to service to the Church, just as the Church is subordinated to service to the Kingdom.
of God and of the entire world. And this is why the second aspect, the hierarchy and the Church, must be first and foremost Christian.

And it is here that Pope John Paul II left us his great lesson: his humility, his poverty, his detachment from vanities, the certainty of his doctrine, a discipline founded not so much on legalism as on conviction and love, are expressions of a Pope at the pinnacle of the hierarchy at the service of the Church, but above all of a Christian who, like Paul, can say: "Imitate me as I imitate Jesus Christ." And from here comes the third note: the Marian aspect.

I emphasized the affection the Pope showed for the Virgin Mary and concluded by reading the short message the Pope addressed to the Third Marian Congress in Ecuador, his only radio message addressed to Latin America.

That evening, I attended the Mass of the Franciscan Fathers in the Parish of Concepción, on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. In my homily, I introduced Saint Francis as a Catholic and explained the structure of the Church, with its human shortcomings in the hierarchy. Then, secondly, Saint Francis is a Christian, the hierarchical Church at the service of Christianity. And that is why it must express holiness and a sense of the Gospel in all its structures. And Francis offers us the example of a truly Christian Catholic. And from there, my third thought: the complete man,

Francis, because he is an authentic Christian, is also a fully developed, joyful, broad-minded man, etc.

Wednesday, October 4, 1978.

Saint Francis's Day. I went to celebrate it in the town of San Francisco Morazán, in the department of Chalatenango, where I had been invited several times. The welcome was warm and welcoming. I was led to the church where we celebrated Holy Mass, a completely packed church. Sister Imelda, an Oblate of Divine Love, resident in Citalá, works there, but according to the Episcopal Vicar of Chalatenango, Father Fabián, she is doing good work in that town, which has been without a priest for some time.

I also preached the same concept as yesterday's homily in honor of Saint Francis, naturally applying it to the difficult environment of the Chalateco people: denounced, observed, and feared. And I invited them to live an authentic and courageous Catholicism and Christianity despite all the difficulties.

After Mass, we met with pastoral workers, and I was pleased to learn that some cantons have excellent pastoral centers. Father Fabián and Mother Imelda planned the work to continue with them, continually growing in the spirit of pastoral care.

Upon my return to San Salvador, I received news of the discovery of Mr. Fujio Matsumoto's body. I had spoken several times with his wife and daughter, trying to console and guide them. That afternoon, they were waiting to tell me the news, while, through tears, they expressed their satisfaction at having been able to take his ashes to Japan.

I was also expected at the Archbishop's Palace to discuss our refugee's case. A lawyer intervened, and the matter is very interesting, but highly confidential.

Thursday, October 5, 1978.

The first visitor is a member of FAPU, an organization interested in hearing and communicating with the Archbishop's possible refugee. I tried to avoid the issue to preserve the secrecy, which we will discuss later. The Christian Democrats took care of this refugee and granted him asylum in the Venezuelan Embassy, where he was taken by members of that party. Previously, he had provided very interesting statements about the tragic situation of the disappeared, who are still in prison.

Even today I have had a relationship that, in the early hours of the morning, Father David Rodríguez was captured along with Piquín, a radio host, or rather, a singer, on Radio Ysax, who broadcast the five o'clock program. They were taken to the police, and Father Trinidad Nieto was also captured, there in Apopa. He too was taken to the National Guard. Father Nieto was informed that afternoon that he was free, while the other police officers remained in prison.

Friday, October 6, 1978.

This morning, Father David Rodríguez and Piquín were released and went to the Archbishop's Palace to report on the treatment they received from the National Police. They addressed the Father with great respect, as the goal was to give the impression that

the priests had not been offended, that there was no persecution against the Church. Bishop Aparicio was present at the police station, and they made him understand precisely the respect shown to the priests and that what they were seeking was Marxist infiltration.

Unfortunately, instead of defending the Church's cause, Archbishop Aparicio has shared the police's motives, which seems dangerous for the Archbishopric, as it aims to give the impression that the Archbishopric is exaggerating, that there is clear communist infiltration, and that we are being unjust when we denounce such abuses against the people and the Church.

This morning we also resumed our breakfast consultation. We studied the current situation in the country and the role of the Church. I admired the loyalty of these priests and lay people who offer such a valuable service to the Archbishop. We concluded with the initiative to dedicate a morning of reflection to studying the working document of the Third Puebla Conference, to help me propose some specific points that should be brought to the attention of the Latin American episcopate.

This afternoon we celebrated Mass in memory of Mr. Fujio Matsumoto, kidnapped in May. His body was found on San Jacinto Hill in a plastic bag, still intact, allowing for identification. According to Japanese ritual, he was cremated, and his ashes, in a small urn, were presented at Mass. His family, including his wife and daughter, will bring these ashes back to their homeland.

Saturday, October 7, 1978.

Personally, I've been busy reflecting and haven't had any office work. I simply asked Father Pedraz to copy the Puebla working document for the study we discussed yesterday.

Sunday, October 8, 1978.

During the eight o'clock Mass in the Cathedral, Dutch television broadcast the Mass, including his homily and all the events surrounding it, which, thank God, is becoming an ecclesial event. I saw the Ecuadorian ambassador and the cultural attaché of the U.S. Embassy among the crowd. The Dutch who came to film it on television told me it was magnificent. They were struck by the crowd and the attention. The Dutch promised me they would also attend the Mass celebrated that evening at the Calvary of Santa Tecla.

In the afternoon, I attended a grassroots community meeting held at the parish convent of Soyapango. It was very interesting, especially for the participation of the young people who, through conversation with me, sought answers to many interesting questions.clarified, including the poor relationship between the parish priest and the communities. And they urged us to find a solution that would make that parish a true Christian community, headed by the parish priest, and with whom we must engage in a very frank dialogue, to present the Christian witness of a true community that follows Jesus Christ. We celebrated the Eucharist in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, which is the patronal feast celebrated there.

And in the evening, as already mentioned, I celebrated Holy Mass at the Calvary of Santa Tecla, to solemnly introduce the new parish priest, Father Francisco Xavier Aguilar, a Jesuit. The vicar, Father Benito Tovar, and other priests were present, as well

as representatives of all the religious communities of Santa Tecla, as well as a multitude of faithful who filled the church. So much so that the parish priest was pleasantly surprised by the welcome he received.MayAfter Mass, we shared cordially with some parishioners.

And in my room at Divine Providence Hospital, the Dutch television crew interviewed me about the situation of the Church and the country. We ended the evening quite happy to have spent another day working to spread the Kingdom of God on earth.

Monday, October 9, 1978.

In the afternoon I went to celebrate Mass in the Canton of La Loma, jurisdiction of San Pedro Perulapán.mass offering suffrage for the two murdered farmers, found near the road ofApple.

I was surprised by the large crowd waiting for me. I offered them words of comfort. The victims' mother, wives, children, and other relatives and friends were there. It was evident in all the fear that was spreading among those segments of our beloved people. A fear justified by the repression and abuse of authority by the security forces and, above all, by the armed peasants, as an organization of the Order.

In fact, while I was celebrating Mass, they appeared with their machetes, some unsheathed, and began observing the crowd; they took the license plate of the truck we were traveling in with the nuns. And there was a clear aggressive attitude, or at least a suspicious vigilance. And I understood the farmers' fear and why many men sleep outside

their homes, fearful of being caught at night. It's a disgrace that the authorities support an organization that opposes other fellow farmers.

This is what I analyzed in my Third Pastoral Letter. I was very satisfied with the comfort we were able to offer grieving families and the encouragement and courage we also sought to convey to the Christian community.

At the Archbishop's residence, two university students representing Ageus visited to ask the Archbishop for support for their requests regarding the University, which is dominated by armed groups and has undermined the trust of that cultural community. I gladly offered to assist them within my jurisdiction. To this end, they agreed to summon others to the Archbishop's residence for the following day.

Tuesday, October 10, 1978.

Among my visits, I visited some poor farmers from La Unión, in the diocese of San Miguel. One of them showed signs of unexpected torture during a Christian gathering. A member of the National Guard, who arrived unexpectedly, struck him on the back of the head and then kicked him in the stomach. The man believes these blows are affecting his health. He even fears losing his sight and wanted to report the incident to see what else could be done for them.

Also present was Dr. Hugo López, a Christian student who, since Saturday, had been missing the whereabouts of his two daughters, both graduates. They were captured by National Police officers and have yet to be located in any security facility. We took note of this case to report on our radio program.

Last Tuesday, we also resumed the practice of holding working breakfasts for evaluation and planning by Curia leaders. Father Brito, Monsignor Urioste, and Father Chus Delgado were present at the Divina Provvidenza Hospital. We also discussed issues related to the Pastoral Commission, which needs to be reorganized, and to this end, we scheduled a meeting with other pastoral specialists.

The meeting proposed by the Ageus students took place in the afternoon. A representative of the Parents' Association, a representative of the Human Rights Commission, and Father Brito, representing the Archbishopric, arrived. A new meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow.

In the evening, a dinner was held at the home of architect Romeo Jovel with members of the Cursillo Movement Secretariat. There was a very interesting conversation about Christianity and how it should be lived in our time. I was deeply encouraged to see how these new commitments are being received. The Church, without betraying its ancient traditions, must assume them to be in tune with the present moment and with what the world expects of it as a service to Jesus Christ.

Wednesday, October 11, 1978.

The two main activities of the Curia today were the meeting of the financial administration with the Priestly Cooperative at noon, during which the possibility of transferring the Curia's funds to the deposit of the Priestly Cooperative, which provides priority interests and services to our Curia, was discussed.

We agreed and asked for full cooperation to meet the financial needs of our Archdiocese. I realized that the situation is precarious and that we must explore ways to best ensure the financial security of our activities.

At night, the Caritas Council. The Archdiocesan Council, which I convened to advise me on the statutes, which establish that the Archbishop is responsible for electing the National Council and the President. Archbishop Aparicio was appointed by the Episcopal Conference, with the approval of Archbishop Chávez, and according to the statutes, his term is only one year. I feel the responsibility to appoint an efficient Council to guide this highly responsible institution with honesty and a sense of the Church.

A commission composed of Engineer Galván and one of the ladies from the Archdiocesan Council was appointed to meet with Monsignor Aparicio and propose our point, namely, the appointment by the Archbishopric of the National Council of Caritas.

.

.

Thursday, October 12, 1978.

Today I received a visit from the British Ambassador, who expressed great interest in learning about the situation of the Church and, in general, of El Salvador, particularly the Church's relations with the Government.

At noon, I celebrated Mass at the "María Eugenia" house of the Sisters of the Asunción. All the communities working in El Salvador gathered, revisiting their charisms to put them at the service of our people. Since it was the feast of Our Lady of the Pillar, I

spoke to them about this trust in the Virgin and how providential her presence is for our continent.

Friday, October 13, 1978.

I celebrated at the Santa Teresa school, run by the Carmelite Sisters of Santa Teresa, who wanted to anticipate the feast of their patron saint, Saint Teresa of Jesus.

Afterwards, I accompanied Father Cristóbal Cortés to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart for the award ceremony, or rather, the high school diploma, of the first graduates of the College Saint Anthony of Soyapango. I invited the young people to realize the two syntheses they should have drawn from Catholic schools: the synthesis between culture and faith, and the synthesis between faith and life.

Afterwards, I went with the Carmelite nuns from the hospital to spend some time resting at the house of the Oblates of Divine Love in Planes de Renderos.

Saturday, October 14, 1978.

I attended the lay meeting held at the Soyapango convent. These lay people collaborate with priests and meet nationally every month. I urged the diocese to intensify its prayers, as on this day the cardinals arrive in Rome to elect John Paul I's successor.

Sunday, October 15, 1978.

At 8:00 a.m. Mass in the cathedral, I delivered the usual homily, denouncing in particular the case of the man who has been missing since December 1977, who escaped from the Treasury Police prison on September 29th and is currently seeking asylum at the Venezuelan embassy.

This is a clear demonstration that the missing are, for the most part, prisoners held by the security forces.

The theme of the homily, the three Gospel readings, was titled: "God's Feast with Men." When God prepares a feast, he invites everyone, but not everyone is worthy of that invitation; just as the Church is the messenger of God's invitation to the feast.

At eleven o'clock I celebrated Mass in the Colonia Roma, where the Carmelite Fathers celebrated their patroness, Saint Teresa.

And that evening I was in the Atlacatl neighborhood, at the Parish of Divine Providence, where the Redemptorist Fathers work very well. After Mass, we had a meeting to organize the board of directors of the Parish Caritas Committee.

Monday, October 16, 1978.

Today we received the good news of the election of the new Pope, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, who took the name John Paul II. Through Vatican Radio, we received his first

blessing and heard his first words. We felt the Church's joy and asked the Lord for many blessings.At the tremendous responsibility of John Paul II.

Tuesday, October 17, 1978.

A very busy morning of visits. In the afternoon, an interesting meeting was held on the pastoral issues of the Archdiocese, which concluded with an analysis of our current pastoral situation and a study of our organization to improve our pastoral work.

With Father Enrique Gloden, national director of the Pontifical Missionary Works, we made the recording that we are preparing,for everyone TheIt will be broadcast on Radio Ysax, the Pan-American Voice, on Wednesday.

I had a pleasant visit from a group of young people from one of the sectors of the Miramonte parish, who had been preparing for First Communions and Confirmations and came to invite me, and we discussed their pastoral work in depth.

In the evening, the dinner at Santa Tecla, organized by the community for him, was prepared as if it were a birthday celebration.

Wednesday, October 18, 1978.

In the evening, we met with the pastoral workers of Soyapango. We spoke very openly about the lack of communication with the parish priest, Father... but the conversation was very positive, and I left with great hopes for mutual collaboration.

Thursday, October 19, 1978.

I celebrated Mass at the Colegio de la Divina Providencia, in the elementary school section. It was the feast day of the founder of the Passionist Sisters, St. Paul of the Cross. And I spoke to them about that charism, instilling in them submission to God's will as the best cross one can accept.

In the afternoon, we had an interesting visit with Father Walter Guerra, a man deeply knowledgeable about the secrets and depths of the country's political situation. We agreed to continue our conversation.

Then, a visit of the representatives of the farmers was organized to expose it. The plight of workers harvesting coffee, cotton, and sugarcane, and the improvements they are demanding from the Ministry of Labor, have prompted me to support their just demands. I also made it clear to them that, in fairness, the needs of landowners must be taken into account, and they agreed, and I believe many of the farmers' demands are just. This is a reason to continue this commitment to supporting our beloved people.

Friday, October 20, 1978.

The visit of Eugenio Araujo was interesting. He requested the presence of Monsignor Urioste, who explained his spending plans for sugarcane cultivation and how the farmers' requests are impossible to meet given the current situation. I had the impression that he had already formed his own opinions and that dialogue was of little

use. As I told him, he understood the needs of sugarcane growers, but it was also necessary to understand the pressing needs of the farmer collaborators and that intelligent solutions needed to be found.

Another very important visit this morning was that of the president of Cebemo, a Dutch humanitarian organization, who expressed great interest in learning about the situation in the country and the Church.

We discussed this at length, and he offered his full cooperation in supporting our pastoral work. I thanked him for the wonderful help he had given us in improving our printing press, and when he asked me what program we needed help with next, I mentioned improving the coordination of the Press Office and the Legal Aid Office. He was very pleased with our proposal and promised to help us establish a more formal vicariate of solidarity.

At lunchtime, a meeting will be held with representatives of the Archdiocese and the Christian Democratic Party to discuss the country's situation and, each within their respective spheres of competence, seek solutions.

There has been much talk of democratization, in the sense of allowing greater participation of Salvadorans in public administration, a goal the political parties must work toward, and also in the sense of normalizing the country's situation toward legality and greater respect for democratic institutions. We have assumed pastoral responsibility and, from our evangelical perspective, have worked for the betterment of the country. In private, one of them, Mr. Arene, made very pertinent observations about the role my preaching is playing, for which I am grateful, as it was very constructive criticism.

That night, my stomach pain worsened and I called Dr. Saca, who ordered me admitted. I've been admitted to the emergency room and the hospital since this evening.

Saturday, October 21, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Sunday, October 22, 1978.

I spent Saturday, October 21st, and Sunday, October 22nd, in the hospital, well cared for by Dr. Saca and the hospital director, a dear Catholic, Dr. Badía, with whom I spoke about the social situation. He is a doctor with great sensitivity to social issues and believes that a profession should not be lived solely for oneself, but in service to the people. He gave me a book he wrote and the magazines he republished, where he advocates this principle of health for the people.

Sunday Mass was celebrated by Father Jesús Delgado, who delivered a courageous homily, denouncing the anomalies in the University and other unjust situations in the country.

Monday, October 23, 1978.

I've returned home after finally receiving treatment at the Diagnostic and Emergency Center. I've prepared a short message for the day I return from the hospital, to broadcast on the radio; and, following the doctor's instructions, I will refrain from going out to fulfill my commitments this week. I regret this, but it's God's will at play, manifested in my still uncertain health.

Tuesday, October 24, 1978.

Saint Raphael's Day, patron saint of hospitals. I was unable to go to San Rafael, Chalatenango, where I was supposed to celebrate the feast of this patron saint, nor to Paraíso, where a catechetical meeting was to be held. However, I was able to celebrate Mass at the Diagnostic Hospital and express my gratitude for the generous and free care provided by Dr. Saca and the doctors present at the time, as well as the nurses and staff. They expressed great joy at this Mass, which they had not expected in their hospital.

Wednesday, October 25, 1978.

For the same reason, due to poor health, I had to cancel my engagement with Father Sergio Moreno, parish priest of San José Guayabal, to celebrate his 25th anniversary of priesthood with him. But spiritually, I joined him in his thanksgiving.

Thursday, October 26, 1978.

This morning at noon, in the Cathedral, we celebrated Mass with the priests and faithful in suffrage for the new Pope, John Paul II. As usual, it was deeply heartfelt, and I was able to express to the faithful and the Archdiocese my unwavering support for the successor of Peter.

Friday, October 27, 1978.

This day,they were concluding in Puebla the meeting that was supposed to begin on October 12 and which, due to the deaths of Popes Paul VI and John Paul I, the new Pope, John Paul II, has set for a later date, which we do not yet know.

Saturday, October 28, 1978.

Still feeling weak, I had to cancel my long-awaited visit to San Antonio los Ranchos because they were celebrating the Corn Festival that day. A traditional festival that uses all corn products, I couldn't help but send them a written message.praising him ThisTradition demonstrates how the Church is involved in every effort to promote humanity and how we desire that this product of our land, corn, whose grain is the basis of our diet, can be on every table, where even this is often missing.

A meeting was also supposed to be held that day in San Antonio Abad, but I asked Monsignor Urioste to preside, because it posed pastoral difficulties for the various groups in this somewhat complicated parish.

Sunday, October 29, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Monday, October 30, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Tuesday, October 31, 1978.

A meeting with the Major Seminary and the parish priests hosting seminarians, the Seminary team, and the Pastoral Commission took place at the house of the Passionist Sisters, on the road to Planes de Renderos. It was a very candid meeting, which explored the seminary's challenges, analyzing the year now ending, and noting numerous shortcomings, but encouraging us to overcome them based on a sincere desire for authentic pastoral ministry in our Archdiocese.

Wednesday, November 1, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Thursday, November 2, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Friday, November 3, 1978.

I celebrated the feast of Saint Martin with the Parish of Quezaltepeque. There were confirmations of young people, well prepared by Father Roberto and his collaborators. The parish church, the Church of Calvary, and the convent are still occupied by Father Quinteros, a true usurper, but one who feels supported by political forces hostile to the Church. I encouraged those present, who were numerous, to remain steadfast in their union with the true Church and reminded them that the temple is not the physical Church, but that each of us, and all of us as a community, form the living temple being built for the glory of God.

Saturday, November 4, 1978.

On this feast of St. Charles Borromeo, I had the pleasure of ordaining Rafael Urrutia, who completed his theological studies at the seminary in Guatemala. He is a young man of great hope and, above all, deeply committed to the hierarchy of his archdiocese. He joins the pastoral team in Chalatenango.

Sunday, November 5, 1978.

At noon I attended the celebration promoted by the Parish of Santo Tomás to commemorate Father Teodoro Alvarenga's 25 years of parish work. I praised his work. I demonstrated how a good priest is a true blessing from the Lord and encouraged the community to remain supportive of their parish priest.

Monday, November 6, 1978.

We met with Engineer Galván, Dr. Fuentes, and other consultants to discuss the issue of changing the National Council and President of Caritas, which is currently under discussion. This is so that the statutes of Caritas National, which require the Archbishop to be accountable for his actions, can be addressed fairly and Caritas can recover its true mission in the country. Everyone is willing to support the Archbishop's position of promoting a new National Council, which includes some of those present.

Today also marks the 50th anniversary of Father Platero's religious life in his Jesuit community of El Carmen of Santa Tecla. Although he serves pastorally in the parish of Guadalupe, in the department of San Vicente, I sent him the Archdiocese's congratulations.

Tuesday, November 7, 1978.

At noon, at the Divine Providence Hospital, I celebrated with the priests who are currently celebrating their 25th anniversaries: Fathers Sergio Moreno, Cristóbal Cortés, Roberto Torruella, Pablo Castillo, and Carlos Ayala of the Diocese of San Miguel, among others. A particularly moving note was the presence of three priests ordained on that same date, who no longer exercise their priestly ministry and, after being duly dispensed, have married. They are Luis Alonso Machado, Maeda, and Matías Romero.

Both the priests and the three lay priests expressed feelings of deep priestly sympathy. Father Garrido was present, and they recalled the times when these priests were seminarians and he was a seminary professor.

Father Platero was also present, with whom we shared fond memories and celebrated his 50th anniversary of religious life. Afterward, we had lunch together in the dining room of the Carmelite Sisters at the hospital, where we continued our cordial encounter.

In the vicariate of Mejicanos, together with Monsignor Urioste, we have studied with the parish priests of that vicariate the situation of the parish of Mejicanos, which Father Barrera will leave, and the vicariate will jointly decide on the replacement.

Wednesday, November 8, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Thursday, November 9, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Friday, November 10, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Saturday, November 11, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Sunday, November 12, 1978.

In the afternoon, I celebrated Mass and several Confirmations for young people at the El Carmen Cantonment of the Parish of Christ the Redeemer, led by Father Angulo. The catechists, led by a seminarian, prepared this group very well and invited several communities, who were present and shared their Christian experiences after the Mass.

Monday, November 13, 1978.

At the house of the Passionist nuns, on the road to Planes de Renderos, we spent the whole day with a group of priests and lay people who advised me on the study of the document that will serve as the basis for the meeting in Puebla.

I have gathered a lot of experience and knowledge, which will support my performance as a pastor in Puebla.

Tuesday, November 14, 1978.

We held a pastoral meeting. In it, we are trying to gather, as in an inventory, all the work, organizations, etc. of our pastoral ministry, to ensure better coordination.

Another meeting was also held at the Mejicanos rectory to discuss the same issue of replacing the parish priest of Mejicanos.

This afternoon, a meeting was held with the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas to learn about the progress of the modification of the statutes of the National Council and Caritas National. This modification of the statutes was implemented at the initiative of the current president, Monsignor Aparicio, with the support of the Vicar General, Monsignor Revelo. Bypassing the Archbishop's authority, they obtained a modification of the statutes from the Ministry of the Interior. Therefore, letters were exchanged between the Archbishop and the government protesting this abuse and, at the same time, affirming

the Archbishop's right to act in this way, without whose authorization such changes cannot be made.

But the Archdiocesan Council, which is completely within the position of the Archbishop, is willing to work for a Caritas of the Archdiocese that responds to the spirit of a true institution, a manifestation of the charity of the Church.

Wednesday, November 15, 1978.

A very interesting meeting with the Episcopal Vicar of Chalatenango, with the director of the Minor Seminary, also from Chalatenango, Father Héctor Figueroa, and with the Archdiocesan Pastoral Commission. Father Cortina assisted us as a technician in the renovation of the house and also promised to design a new Minor Seminary that, with God's help, we will build in Chalatenango. This integration into the city will be very beneficial for the vocations of the young men preparing for it.in high school and from there move on to the Major Seminary of the Archdiocese.

That evening, the graduation ceremony took place at Catarina School in Maggie, dedicated to the Archbishop. I thanked them and expressed my gratitude for their continued support of the Archdiocese's pastoral work. The director of this school is Sister Socorro, an Oblate Sister of Divine Love of Nicaraguan origin, who has always been enthusiastic and dedicated to all that the Archdiocese of San Salvador represents today.

Thursday, November 16, 1978.

Ilopango celebrates the patronal feast of Saint Christopher, and for this occasion, the parish priest, Father Fabián Amaya, and the catechists have prepared an excellent group of young people for Confirmation. After Mass, a very interesting discussion took place with these young people.

In the evening, a meeting will be held with the lay advisory committee to discuss a meeting of the Basic Ecclesial Communities and lay movements. The meeting will be held on December 17th, the Sunday before Christmas, as a gathering of Christians from the Archdiocese to celebrate Christmas in the spirit of Christianity.

Friday, November 17, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Saturday, November 18, 1978.

In Chalatenango, with the entire pastoral team of the vicariate-the episcopal vicar, Father Fabián Amaya, several parish priests (some absent), religious communities, and some lay people-we conducted an evaluation of the vicariate's work. The frankness with which the shortcomings were discussed was remarkable, as was the great hope that the pastoral work led by Father Amaya is inspiring.

That evening I attended the closing ceremony of the La Luz Parish Academy, where Father Brito awarded tailoring diplomas to several young men and women who

had thus completed their academic studies. He attended the Caterina school of May, which I greeted with great affection, being a school very devoted to the Archbishop.

I was unable to attend the Emmanuel Baptist Church academy in the afternoon due to lack of time and poor health, where I was also supposed to close The course and where he had been kindly invited by the pastor and some other members of that Church.

Sunday, November 19, 1978.

After Mass in the Cathedral, I briefly attended the meeting of lay people from various vicariates, gathered in the Parish Hall of San Giuseppe della Montagna. It's very moving to see how the laity are progressing in our Archdiocese. I believe the meeting wasn't coordinated with sufficient competence and may have caused some frustration among some who, perhaps, expected more.

For my part, I tried to explain to them what the laity are, what the Church expects, what we aim to achieve with these meetings of lay people from the various vicariates-an organization that makes the laity feel empowered and live out their responsibilities.

In the afternoon I went to Chiltiupán, a picturesque town on the coast of La Libertad, run pastorally by the Sisters of the Rosary of Fatima. We had many children confirmed, but they all had alreadyI used to use itI was right. I saw how the nuns worked, even though there were some shortcomings, but I could sense the presence of someone who animated the pastoral work in that picturesque region.

Monday, November 20, 1978.

I traveled to San Miguel to honor our patroness, Our Lady of Peace. The bishop of Santiago de María, Monsignor Rivera, joined me on my pilgrimage, and together we celebrated Mass at 11:00 a.m. in the Cathedral Basilica of San Miguel. That same day, tomorrow, due to the presence of the supreme civil authorities, we would not have had the opportunity to celebrate the more intimate homage we had desired, and because these authorities take advantage of the circumstances to gain publicity and are not particularly interested in the religious homage being promoted.

The mass was private, but despite everything, several friends from San Miguel accompanied us and, as they left, they regretted not having warned us in advance so they could have a more solemn mass.

Tuesday, November 21, 1978.

Feast of Our Lady of Peace. The other bishops, the President and his wife, and other dignitaries were present at St. Michael's Cathedral. The Nuncio presided over the Mass.

I celebrated Mass at the Colegio de la Divina Providencia, where the Superior General of the Passionist Sisters was present, along with the Passionist Fathers who work in Jiquilisco, in the Diocese of Santiago de María, and all the sisters, as they are celebrating a jubilee for their congregation. In my homily, I recalled how it was a very special date for me, in honor of Our Lady of Peace, and how it was fitting to celebrate it

in such an ecclesial way. This is precisely why the congregation has a very significant connection with this feast of November 21st.

In the afternoon we held an interesting pastoral meeting, gathering current pastoral realities and working to see how we can organize a better and more organized pastoral approach overall.

Wednesday, November 22, 1978.

The group of priests from the Archdiocese, who meet with priests from other dioceses, wanted to have a special meeting with me, and we held it at the Passionist Sisters' Lourdes estate. We discussed very interesting and priestly topics, such as the seminary and other aspects of diocesan governance. We received very constructive criticism and a sincere desire to collaborate on better organizing our archdiocesan service.

Thursday, November 23, 1978.

At the same property of the Sisters of Lourdes, I held a consultative meeting with several priests and lay people to jointly study the working document that will be used in Puebla. The suggestions, especially regarding the realities of our country and our Archdiocese, were very useful for my understanding and participation in Puebla.

Friday, November 24, 1978.

I met with the Fathers of the Vicariate of Soyapango at the convent of the Church of Soyapango. It's clear that there's still a long way to go. There's no unity or a unified plan, but I noticed efforts to work as a more efficient team. They complain about the parish of Ilopango, given that Father Fabián is the Episcopal Vicar of Chalatenango, and believe it would be more appropriate to have a permanent priest in Ilopango. They also complain about the nuns who work in Apulo and don't attend vicariate meetings. I took note of this and implored them to help me visit them and collaborate with them, so that there would be more enthusiasm in the vicariate's pastoral work.

Saturday, November 25, 1978.

I visited the María Auxiliadora de Tenancingo canton, in the department of Cuscatlán, where the feast of their patron saint was being celebrated. I felt profound pastoral satisfaction, because the people are so fervent and welcoming. After Mass, they took us to a home, where they served us dinner and offered a short literary and comedy show.

Sunday, November 26, 1978.

Today, Father Fabián Amaya, on my behalf, appointed the Maryknoll Fathers of the Parish of the Sweet Name of Mary, with its branch in San Francisco Morazán. I am happy to be able to count on the collaboration of these dynamic and selfless Fathers. This too is a very challenging region, but with God's help and the good will of these Maryknoll priests, I hope much can be accomplished in the department of Chalatenango.

The feast of Saint Joseph, which was to be celebrated that day in San José Villanueva, was suppressed because some sacred vessels had been stolen a few days earlier, and the condition was set that, if they did not appear, there would not be a solemn celebration, but rather an act of reparation.

In the afternoon I went to San Marcos to administer Confirmation to a beautiful group of young people prepared by that community.

Monday, November 27, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Tuesday, November 28, 1978.

A Senate meeting was held at Divina Providencia Hospital, and in the afternoon a pastoral meeting was held at the Archbishop's Palace. However, this day was dramatically and tragically marked by the violent death of Father Rafael Ernesto Barrera, presumed dead in a fake skirmish by security forces in a home in the Divina Providencia neighborhood. Father Neto was found shot, but according to some speculation, he had already been brought dead at the scene. In this regard, see the various reports issued by the commission of inquiry, which contradicted several aspects of the official reports.

At night, Father Neto's body was placed in the church of Mejicanos, where his brother, Father Manuel Barrera, is parish priest.

Wednesday, November 29, 1978.

The main event that day was the funeral of Father Neto Barrera, at the Church of the Mexicans. His grave was dug there, as it was feared that a procession to the cemetery could be exploited by clandestine groups and cause further unrest. The Mass was impressive, with perhaps more than 60 priests, the church and surrounding fields completely filled. It was a Mass that demonstrated the affection of many people for Father Neto, especially the working class, to whom he had dedicated himself in a special way.

Speculation continues that Father Neto belonged to the FPL (Popular Liberation Forces), a violent force within the Popular Revolutionary Block. We cannot yet confirm or deny this news, which is a source of great concern for the Church.

Thursday, November 30, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Friday, December 1, 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Saturday, December 2, 1978.

Invited by a sewing academy founded during my time in Mercedes Umaña, in the diocese of Santiago de María, I went to join Archbishop Rivera in this simple yet beautiful celebration. But, above all, I wanted to share it with the Bishop of Santiago de María.

There is a lot of affection in that city, especially at Miguelito and his wife's house, where we had lunch.

That evening, we celebrated a solemn act of vengeance in the parish of San Martín, where the Blessed Sacrament had been stolen. From the moment I entered the city, I was warmly welcomed, and the Mass was deeply moving.

Sunday, December 3, 1978.

For this day, I received an invitation from Father Ernesto Barrera, may he rest in peace! It was a workers' meeting in Ayagualo. It couldn't be held because he has now passed away, but we prayed, along with his friends, for his eternal rest.

That afternoon, I met with three British senators, who had come to learn about the situation in the country and to personally inform me of my nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in the British Parliament. The news, which had circulated here a few days earlier, was received very differently: among friends, it was, of course, a source of joy

and many congratulations, but on the official side and in the media, there was a rather significant silence.

However, on Sunday the British spoke at length with several advisers, who briefed them on the political, social, and economic situation in the country and expressed great interest in learning more about it.

Finally, one of them told me that they were three of the 118 senators who had asked for my nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize and that, now that he had discovered the truth, he would ask for that prize twice for me.I took advantage of itTo express my gratitude for the gesture of the British Parliament, which represents a great support for me, as well as for the very significant visit of these three British senators.

They subsequently visited prisons, farmer shelters, and farms, and, in short, they have excellent information and a deep conviction about the human rights violations being committed here. This, of course, has not satisfied either the government or the pro-government sectors of our country.

Monday, December 4, 1978.

Today, some priests of the archdiocese began their spiritual retreat at the novitiate of the Somascan Fathers.

Tuesday, December 5, 1978.

Clergy meeting at the San José de la Montaña Seminary. Fathers on retreat also attended.

In the evening I met with the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas, where I reported the violation committed against me by modifying the statutes of the National Council of Caritas.

In the morning, a clergy meeting was held at the San José de la Montaña seminary, which was also attended by the priests who had been on retreat during the week.

This evening, the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas met. I briefed them on the status of events, regarding the change in the statutes implemented without the Archbishop's consent, as required by the statutes themselves, and the legal appeal filed with the Ministry of the Interior. The Archdiocesan Council's spirit in the face of this event is admirable. There is no vengeance or anger, but rather a spirit of intense work for a genuine Caritas of the Archdiocese.

CHAPTER 6.

Year 1978.

Diary from December 6, 1978 to January 8.

1978/1979.

Wednesday, December 6, 1978.

Today is the patronal feast of Tonacatepeque, in honor of Saint Nicholas the Bishop, and there I had the good fortune to preside over a very solemn mass and then speak with some priests from the vicariate of Cuscatlán, who came to participate in this celebration.

In the afternoon, an interesting meeting was held, promoted by the Christian Democratic Party (Cdp), with representatives of Anep, the private sector. We discussed three sectors: the Christian Democratic Party, businesspeople, and the Church. Representing the Church were Monsignor Urioste, Father Jesús Delgado, and myself. There was a willingness to engage in dialogue, but also a strong attachment to one's own interests. Nonetheless, the afternoon was very useful; there was a remarkable exchange of views, and these discussions will continue. Let us pray to the Lord that this has resulted in something positive for the good and peace of the country.

At nightI presided over the Eucharist, a Plan del Pino, to pray for the eternal repose of one of the workers who passed away with Father Neto Barrera, since this worker was originally from there and worked in that pastoral ministry. The Spanish Carmelite nuns who preside over that community testify to the affection the city had for Father Barrera and themselves recognize that he was a very helpful priest, deeply devoted to the service of the pastoral ministry.

Thursday, December 7, 1978.

Another meeting with the consultants was held at the Passionist Sisters' estate in Planes de Renderos to review the Puebla working document. This consultation is ongoing and proving very fruitful for my participation in the Puebla meeting.

In the evening, a group of young people from San Antonio Abad came to visit me, who expressed their political and pastoral concerns, and I had the opportunity to clarify several issues based on this mentality.

Friday, December 8, 1978.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is celebrated by many parishes and religious institutes. It is not possible to attend everything, despite my good will and the wishes of several communities. I attended the Parish of La Libertad, which has her as its patron saint and where the Eucharistic participation of a very vibrant community is evident. After Mass, we held a discussion meeting with pastoral workers. The Parish Pastoral Council of La Libertad was also established.

There, the pastoral ministry is led by American priests from the Diocese of Cleveland and by religious sisters, also American, who work with great dedication for our people.

In the afternoon, we had an ecumenical meeting with the separated brethren of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, attended by Mr. Asper, representative of the World Council of Churches and the Human Rights Committee. He conveyed greetings for our archdiocesan church from the World Council of Churches and the Seminar or Symposium on Human Rights held in Santiago, Chile. He expressed admiration and affection for our pastoral

work, and we had very interesting discussions with Protestants and Catholics. We also discussed with the separated brethren how to celebrate Unity Week next year.

The prevailing idea is to carry out a more intimate work of conversion, rather than external expressions that cause problems, given the political sensitivity of the environment and also given that many Protestants are taking a very accommodating line towards the government and the status of the Republic.

Saturday, December 9, 1978.

A journalist visited. In the afternoon, a girl who was quite well prepared made her First Communion at Divine Providence Hospital.

Sunday, December 10, 1978.

In the afternoon, Mass was held in Potrero Grande, a hamlet of the parish of Aguilares, where the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated early. The parish priest of Aguilares and the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who assist in the parish's pastoral ministry, were present. The memory of Father Grande and his pastoral work in this area is evident.

Senate meeting at Divine Providence Hospital. That evening, again at the hospital, a meeting was held with a group of friends recommended by Father Neto Barrera. The purpose was to gather testimonies about Father Neto's attitudes and actions, and all expressed profound gratitude, profound sorrow for his passing, and praise for his

Christian work. None of them expressed any abusive attitude or advice toward this priest, whom official sources have attempted to smear.

Monday, December 11, 1978.

Senate meeting at Divine Providence Hospital. That evening, again at the hospital, a meeting was held with a group of friends recommended by Father Neto Barrera. The purpose was to gather testimonies about Father Neto's attitudes and actions, and all expressed profound gratitude, profound sorrow for his passing, and praise for his Christian work. None of them expressed any abusive attitude or advice toward this priest, whom official sources have attempted to smear.

Tuesday, December 12, 1978.

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. A large gathering of faithful gathered at the Church of Guadalupe de la Ceiba; the parish priest, Cataldo Papagno, told me that around 60,000 people came to visit the Virgin during this pilgrimage. I went to celebrate the feast of the Sweet Name of Mary. I had the opportunity to greet the Maryknoll Fathers and spend some time with that community, which also shows many signs of life.

That evening, I celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Las Delicias neighborhood of Santa Tecla, where Father Francisco Xavier, a Jesuit, carried out his work with great enthusiasm. A group of young people were present, and they shared many of their problems with me, and I spoke with them very frankly.

Wednesday, December 13, 1978.

I went to celebrate the feast of Saint Lucia, patron saint of Suchitoto, in that parish church, which was completely overflowing with the faithful. Afterward, we had a very lively meeting with all the priests of the Cuscatlán Vicariate, except Father Sergio Moreno, who suffers from a sore throat. I felt, along with the priests, that a great deal of trust and unity had been created; they themselves expressed this.

In the afternoon, we will continue with a pastoral meeting to review, almost as if to sum up, the events and activities underway in our Archdiocese. Various aspects of our pastoral ministry will be addressed to ensure optimal coordination.

Thursday, December 14, 1978.

On this day, the city of Tacachico traditionally celebrates its patronal feast in honor of the Immaculate Conception and the Apostle St. Paul. I took advantage of these two devotions, while presiding at the Eucharist, to focus on St. Paul's doctrine of redemption, referring to the privileged redemption of the Immaculate Conception. It's a very friendly and lively community, where I've had great satisfaction. It's a shame I couldn't stay after Mass, as I had an appointment at the Apostolic Nunciature at 11:00 with the commission established to investigate the kidnapping of two Englishmen captured by the FARN, the Armed Forces of the National Revolution.

At this meeting, it was reported that the President had refused to grant the requested hearing, denying that there were any political prisoners, as requested by the FAR members, in order to free the two British citizens. We drafted a report declaring our willingness to intercede with the President of the Republic and our failure.

In the afternoon, I received a committee from the Parish of Santa Lucía, Colonia Santa Lucía, at the Hospital of Divine Providence. They came to greet me, along with their parish priest, Father Astor Ruiz, and to present me with a beautiful notebook containing the conclusions of their reflections on my pastoral letter. I congratulated them and saw that they had worked sincerely and that the pastoral letter had helped enlighten their minds regarding grassroots political organizations and their relationship to the Church's pastoral ministry.

Friday, December 15, 1978.

Meeting with members of the national clergy. In the afternoon, a meeting was also held with a group of priests and seminarians to discuss the Seminary issue. We reviewed the reports, to the extent possible to make them public, since each individual report will be delivered to each seminarian. However, overall, we have encountered numerous difficulties with the Archdiocese regarding the Seminary's current situation, and a commission has been established to continue studying the issue on an ongoing basis.

Saturday, December 16, 1978.

In the morning I celebrated Mass and gave First Communion and Confirmation to a group of young people in the church of Calvary, presided over by the Somaschi Fathers.

It’s 12:30 pm, a Christmas meeting with the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas in a private home, where we were finally assisted.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, the patronal feast took place in the Santa Lucía neighborhood, during which a large group of young people and children received their First Communion and Confirmation.

And even later, at nine o'clock, a niece's wedding in La Ceiba de Guadalupe.

Sunday, December 17, 1978.

The highlight of the day was the meeting of the Basic Ecclesial Communities and lay movements of the various vicariates of the Archdiocese of San Salvador. Approximately 800 people, mostly present in the auditorium of the Colegio Guadalupano, shared their pastoral work and the life of the Archdiocese's communities. The Eucharist I presided at noon was deeply moving for me, due to the participation and lively awareness with which these people participated in the Eucharist, a fruit of their reflections and their commitment to the Church.

At four in the afternoon, I was in Rosario de Mora, where the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love work. They had prepared a group of children for First Communion and Confirmation. It was a very picturesque outing, with lively children and a very loving community.

At eight o'clock that evening, we were at the parish of San Sebastián in Ciudad Delgado, to hand over the parish to the new pastor, Father Juan Antonio Gutiérrez, who replaced the late Father Neto Barrera. The enthusiasm was overwhelming. Mass could not be celebrated in the church, but in the courtyard. After my homily, Father Gutiérrez spoke, offering himself for the role, and after Mass, several lay people spoke into the microphone. There was a joyful atmosphere, one of welcome and willingness to collaborate with the new pastor.

Monday, December 18, 1978.

Today in the Archdiocese we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Remedies, which is celebrated in the church or chapel of La Vega, where Father Raúl Alberto Flores is located. I celebrated Mass there. This same devotion is also celebrated in the canton of San Laureano in Ciudad Delgado, where I also celebrated this afternoon.

Tuesday, December 19, 1978.

The parishes of Quezaltepeque and San José Guayabal celebrate this day in honor of Saint Joseph. Obviously, I couldn't attend. But I went to San José Guayabal, where the parish priest, Father Moreno, is a bit ill, and where this feast of the Holy Patriarch is celebrated with great devotion. I found Father Moreno's visit very constructive.

In the afternoon, we met again to discuss the seminar. That evening, I was invited to dinner at Mr. Viéytez's home, attended by Jesuit Father Paco Estrada, and the rector of

the University of California, Román Mayorga, and his wife. We had a very interesting conversation about the country's problems, the University's problems, and the situation in our Archdiocese. We also spoke very confidentially about the apostolic visitation taking place in our Archdiocese this week.

Archbishop Quarracino came from the Diocese of Avellaneda, Argentina, on behalf of the Holy See and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, to conduct an apostolic visitation to report on the pastoral care of our Archdiocese. He specifically requested information on relations with the Auxiliary Bishop. I know that many people have come to testify to the pastoral care of our Archdiocese, and the outcome of the visit seems, so far, very positive.

Wednesday, December 20, 1978.

In Potonico, we celebrated a Mass of atonement for the sacrilegious theft of the consecrated hosts from that church. From the moment I arrived in town, the welcome was very warm. But before reaching the main town, a group of children approached me with signs and a letter expressing, in addition to a speech given by one of them, their solidarity with the many orphaned children, victims of this human rights violation. They asked me to support their cause and requested a hearing for December 26th, to which I agreed.I granted WithGreat pleasure. Accompanied by the crowd, I headed toward the church; there were very meaningful signs on the streets.

I especially liked the one that said "Our Shepherd and Friend." I celebrated theMasswith Father Fabián Amaya, Father Efraín, parish priest of Chalatenango, and Father Luis Recinos, the new parish priest, at least interim, of the Parish of San Antonio

Los Ranchos and Potonico. Also present was Father Rafael Urrutia, who works in Chalatenango and will be responsible for the Seminary and the Vicariate Secretariat.

After the mass we had a lively meeting with the pastoral workers.

Thursday, December 21, 1978.

A very interesting meeting on economic management issues, listening to Auditor and Engineer Galván and Monsignor Urioste, who discussed very practical issues regarding subsidies and the management of our assets.

In the afternoon we also held a pastoral meeting, dedicated to compiling an inventory of the archdiocese's pastoral activities.

Friday, December 22, 1978.

I celebrated Mass at noon at Asilo Sara. It's a nursing home in Colonia, Costa Rica, that seems rather neglected. It certainly doesn't offer spiritual care, which is necessary to care for so many people.elderly people and people sick of that place.

Saturday, December 23, 1978.

This afternoon I celebrated Holy Mass in the Church of Fatima in Planes de Renderos. The church was completely filled with Franciscan nuns, presided over by the

Superior General of the Congregation and four provincials. Today they were closing the jubilee year they were celebrating to give thanks to God for the 50 years they had spent in the country. It is a congregation with houses in Zacatecoluca, Cojutepeque, Usulután, Berlín, and San Salvador, the College of the Holy Spirit, and the Novitiate house in Planes de Renderos. God has blessed them with many vocations and urged them to work an intimate job of the Church.

In the evening, greeting the Superior General of the congregation of the Passionist Sisters, who has been between them for several days. He left with excellent impressions of the work of his sisters in the country.

Sunday, December 24, 1978.

I celebrated this Christmas Eve in the morning, after Mass in the Cathedral, in the Amatepec neighborhood, where I was warmly welcomed, carrying palm branches that reminded me of Palm Sunday. We blessed the new chapel. Father José Luis Bourguet, head of pastoral ministry in this neighborhood, has earned the affection and respect of all these people, who collaborate with great enthusiasm.

In the afternoon, in Colonia Bernal. It's a hamlet of the parish of Miralvalle, run by the Augustinian Fathers. I believe that Colonia Bernal, with the enthusiasm of its young people, is called to be the leaven of the new parish. We had a group of young people, prepared by Father Plácido, for Confirmation and the Eucharist, which was well attended.

After the Mass, tamales, coffee, and bread were offered to the First Communion children and guests.

In the evening I celebrated Christmas Eve Mass in the Cathedral at seven o'clock and at ten o'clock in the Chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence.

Monday, December 25, 1978.

In the morning, a Mass for weddings and first communions was held at the parish of Soyapango. In the afternoon, a large number of weddings were celebrated-40 couples-and a small group of children celebrated their first communion.

There were two communities that gave me great comfort this Christmas, for the sacramental preparation with which they prepared to receive it, especially their marriage.

Tuesday, December 26, 1978.

The next morning, a group of children from San Antonio Los Ranchos, who had formed a committee in solidarity with orphaned children, came to see me. They had requested an audience and told me of their ideals: that of wanting to have compassion for children. Little friends of yours, who have been orphaned because their parents have been killed or disappeared or are in prison. This Christmas they feel theThe sadness of so many fatherless children, and their desire to help them. I congratulated them and offered them all my support, according to their means.

I had lunch at the Opus Dei house, where I recently moved into a new home, as they're leaving Double Track.

A representative of the International Red Cross visited me to discuss the kidnapping of two Englishmen, a Japanese man, and a Dutchman. He will be speaking to the authorities and asked for my cooperation, which I offered to the best of my ability and expertise.

A pastoral meeting will be held this afternoon to continue collecting data, discuss activities, and find ways to best organize what can be done.

Wednesday, December 27, 1978.

Patronal feast of San Juan Opico. We had the opportunity to concelebrate with Monsignor José María Dueñas, ordained in that same church 50 years ago by his uncle, Bishop Juan Antonio Dueñas of San Miguel. I preached and shared with you the fond memories of Monsignor Dueñas and Monsignor Valladares. I also warmly congratulated the celebrant. After the Mass, we met with the catechists of that parish community and of Tacachico. The issue of a priest for Tacachico was raised again, and I asked them to help me reflect.

In San Juan Opico, we addressed the issue of the priest from Tacachico. I asked the catechists and priests for their collaboration in resolving this urgent problem, with everyone's contribution.

This afternoon I ordained young Jaime Paredes to the deaconry. He has almost completed his theological studies at the Seminary in Guadalajara, Mexico.

He will return to complete his studies, return for a period as a deacon, and then be ordained a priest. There were many illustrious people in the basilica, some from Opus Dei, and I tried to greet everyone.

At night, interview with an American journalist at Divine Providence Hospital.

Thursday, December 28, 1978.

In Antiguo Cuscatlán, we celebrated the traditional Feast of the Innocents. The message I brought was respect for life, a sense of solidarity, and how Christ is the source of our merits. I spoke with Father Héctor Figueroa, who will leave the Diocese to join a religious community and go on a mission, because he feels this is his calling. I respect his vocation and his desires, and I assured him that the Diocese will remain open to him whenever he wishes to return.

In the afternoon, we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of Father Neto Barrera's death at Domus Maria, with a group of workers who met him and shared their impressions with me. I sincerely believe that Father Neto didn't always convey a purely priestly message, but rather was very close to the political and revolutionary ideals of these groups.

However, I've been told he always worked hard to lead the priesthood. It remains to be seen what this priest's deepest ideology was.

It is theThat same day, a meeting of priests was held at the seminary. It was the Priestly Cooperative, celebrating its Christmas celebration; it was very lively and well attended.

Friday, December 29, 1978.

In the evening, a convivial youth gathering took place at the San Antonio Abad pastoral center. About 60 young people shared their opinions, information about their pastoral activities, and asked questions about their current problems.

Saturday, December 30, 1978.

In the Belén de Santa Tecla school, the Carmelite nuns of San José,celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the founder, Mother Clarita Quiróz. In my homily, I celebrated the need to be faithful to the charism and adapt it to current circumstances and the local Church.

I briefly attended the meeting of the Vicariate of the Department of La Libertad, which was held in the convent of the Church of the Concepción. Almost all the priests, religious communities, and lay people involved in that ministry were present.

This afternoon I learned that the FAR, who are holding the four hostages, had accepted the Human Rights Commission's mediation, but were asking me to join that community. When the Human Rights Commission informed me, I replied that I was

happy to accept and that I was available to help save those lives, as well as those of the prisoners these forces are demanding from the government.

Sunday, December 31, 1978.

We've reached the end of the year. The Mass in the Cathedral was well attended, as was the 7:00 PM Mass, during which we celebrated the Mass of January 1st.

At noon I had lunch with the seminarians who work in the Cathedral, at the Sacred Heart School, where this lunch was offered to us.

That evening, at ten o'clock, we meditated before the Blessed Sacrament and celebrated Mass in the Chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence. And in the nuns' dining room, along with other trusted visitors, we witnessed the passage from one old year to the next, amid the explosion of gunpowder.

And we wish you all the best for the new year. Happy New Year!

YEAR 1979.

MCMLXXIX.

SAINT OSCAR

Monday, January 1, 1979.

It's a quiet day, since most of it took place at night. I took a short break at the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love's estate.

This afternoon I celebrated our usual Holy Hour in the Chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence. The turnout was extraordinary. I spoke to them about the biblical meaning of time; about the experience of God visiting humanity; and about humanity's duty to respond to God's visitation, which is time.

Tuesday, January 2, 1979.

With workers returning to work, the Archbishop's Curia is also resuming its normal activities. There were several private audiences, which I attended.

In the afternoon, recording of the interview program I host every Wednesday.

Wednesday, January 3, 1979.

There has been much activity at the Archbishop's Office. Among the most important visits was that of Mrs. Doris Osegueda, who has assumed the role of Director of the Secretariat for Social Communications. We met with Mr. Galván to express our deep interest in ensuring that this year will be a year of organization in our Archdiocesan Curia.

The Special Secretariat is preparing a homily for the first Sunday of Advent. We hope to continue publishing the other homilies in booklets, but I was interested in this first one as a thank you to all those who were kind enough to wish me a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and a Happy New Year on the occasion of my nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I also received a visit from the international Red Cross delegate to discuss the kidnapping of the two Englishmen and the Japanese man, Mr. Suzuki. The Red Cross cannot intervene when another operation is already underway, and in this case, the Commission on Human Rights intervened in the kidnapping matter; at the kidnappers' request, I was also involved.

In the afternoon, over dinner, I had an interesting interview with the Rector of the Seminary, Father Gregario Rosa. He informed me of the other bishops' activities regarding the Seminary, which aims to train only seminarians from suffragan dioceses, thus eliminating the group from the Archdiocese, which, according to the other bishops, is causing problems. Naturally, the Seminary team reacted in a very ecclesiastical manner, saying they were serving the Church in the formation of priests and that the Holy See had intervened, wanting an interdiocesan seminary.

I was pleased with this ecclesial reaction from the team, as well as the reports provided to the Apostolic Visitor who was investigating the Archbishop's actions and the pastoral care of the Archdiocese.

Finally, late that night, I received a visit from Dr. Roberto Lara Velado and Dr. Napoleón González, members of the Intercession Commission for the Resolution of the

British and Japanese Kidnapping. I was informed that a formal petition, supported by numerous popular signatures, was presented to the Legislative Assembly today, calling on the Government to grant a general amnesty to political prisoners and to abolish the Public Order Law.

They spoke with the President of the Assembly, who expressed his willingness to cooperate with the request, but made it clear that his political situation prevented him from doing much. We discussed how we could support this request, preventing extremist groups from engaging in violent actions that could hinder the amnesty request.

A meeting between the parish priests and the Seminary Commission was held at the Archdiocese. The concern expressed by all the priests was very interesting, ensuring that our seminarians in the Archdiocese are understood, supported in their concerns, and adequately trained as priests, in accordance with the pastoral needs of our Archdiocese. Father Sigfredo, Rector of the Minor Seminary, is responsible for continuing to coordinate the reflection on this topic.

A reflection in which all priests present and those who wish to continue collaborating should participate in this great concern, the primary concern of our Diocese: the formation of a clergy capable of meeting the needs of the moment.

Thursday, January 4, 1979.

I went to the Canton of La Junta, to the parish of Concepción de Quezaltepeque, where Father Eduardo Alas carries out a very effective pastoral ministry.

In the canton of La Junta, a sacrilegious theft of the Blessed Sacrament had been committed, and we went to celebrate an atonement ceremony. It was very moving, because upon arriving in town, a group of children with small flags, the colors of the Church, proclaimed the joy and welcome the bishop and parish priest had received there. They also expressed the cooperation provided by the catechists and nuns. The Spanish Carmelite Missionaries were there, working intensely with Father Alas. A large crowd of faithful awaited me at the edge of the canton to accompany me to the chapel. However, attendance was insufficient, so we had to celebrate the Eucharist in the convent corridor, on the esplanade shaded by some picturesque almond trees.

In the Eucharistic message I spoke to you about Christ's presence among us, in the various ways in which He revealed it.

In the ecclesial community, in its ministers, in the proclamation of his word, and above all, in the Eucharist, and how we often respond to that loving presence of the Lord with indifference, persecution, and slander, and how, therefore, reparation is necessary. After Mass, we held a Eucharistic procession, and at the end, with the blessing, I invited them to a moment of human communion.

That is, the different communities that had brought beautiful posters approached the microphone, read their posters, or expressed their feelings of ecclesial communion. And it was truly impressive to hear different voices-men, women, adults, and young people-express a sense of profound solidarity with the Church and their pastor. As Father Alas told me: "In these meetings, one grows in faith." I returned truly grown, confirmed in my desire to serve this noble people of God, whom the Lord has entrusted to me.

Upon my return, I had some important errands to attend to regarding the life of the archdiocese, and also a confidential reason, expressed directly by a well-informed person, that there are threats against me; but with God's help, I hope to overcome them and continue to faithfully serve the Gospel and our people.

Friday, January 5, 1979.

This morning we held a meeting of the Archdiocesan media. The new secretary is Doris Osegueda, who worked with me long ago in San Miguel. Now, after completing her career in journalism and earning a degree in journalism, she has left her job at the University and will take up this important role, which we tried to structure as best as possible in this morning's meeting. In addition to the secretariat, there will be an advisory council that will advise on courses of action and also serve as an advisor to the hierarchy itself. The secretariat oversees radio, the press, and all information services.

The meeting also sought to increase circulation of the daily newspaper Orientación and, above all, to interpret the Archbishop's ideological stance, both in the newspaper and on the radio. It was an extremely constructive and encouraging meeting for the dissemination of the Church's message.

I also had a brief interview with an American journalist, who expressed great admiration for what he saw in our Archdiocese. He believes this approach of the Church is one that can appeal to humanity, since a spiritualist, disembodied approach, uninterested in earthly realities, would no longer be very credible in our times.

I thanked him for his words of encouragement and for his questions about religion and the country's problems, and tried to answer with the loyalty I have always desired.

Another interview with a nun from Ciudad Barrios, who told me about the conflict that broke out on Don Carlos Boillat's farm. It's a conflict related to the coffee harvest, where the owner, a highly respected figure, often doesn't realize what's happening to his subordinates-the administrators and those responsible for the coffee harvest-where the conflict broke out, resulting in one death in that town.

In the afternoon, I visited the community of San José Villanueva, where the Passionist nuns work. Together with the catechists from the parish of Huizúcar, the communities of Huizúcar, Nuevo Cuscatlán, and the parish of San José Villanueva, I visited the community of San José Villanueva, where the Passionist nuns work.and SaintJosé Villanueva, and those from various cantons, had a very interesting discussion on pastoral activities and the difficulties, as well as the hopes and projects that the parish priest, Father Benito Tovar, is carrying forward.

The meeting concluded with delicious pupusas and hot chocolates, served to all participants.

In the evening, representatives of the Human Rights Commission went to Divine Providence Hospital to discuss the abduction issue, which still shows no signs of improvement.

Saturday, January 6, 1979.

After a long time, today we held a Council breakfast.in whatI also consulted those present about my presence in Puebla and received much information and suggestions. There is hope because several bishops and experts will be present who fully agree with the pastoral approach of our Archdiocese. We also attempted to analyze the current situation in the country, the results of the recent apostolic visitation of the Archdiocese, the seminary issue, and other topics that, when discussed with these priests and lay people, prove truly enriching for pastoral judgment.

At noon, an interview with Father Moreno and Beto Cuéllar will provide a summary of the week's information and a commentary for tomorrow's homily.

In the afternoon, a visit to the parish of Apopa, where Father Oscar Martell prepared a confirmation service for the young people, and a meeting with pastoral workers.

Sunday, January 7, 1979.

We celebrated the Mass of the Epiphany in the Cathedral. From the biblical readings, I took the title for my homily: "Christ, Epiphany of God's saving love," and I presented it in three parts: the Epiphany reveals to us a transcendent salvation; I spoke of the need for every movement of vindication to be encompassed in the salvation that God can bring about and that only Christ came to bring about. The second thought: the Epiphany offers us universal salvation; no one is excluded; there are no differences in the face of God's saving love.

And a third thought: the need for faith, exemplified by the Magi, to embrace the salvation revealed and offered at the Epiphany. The Cathedral was packed, as always, thank God!

In the afternoon I attended the installation of the new parish priest of Mejicanos, Father Samuel Orellana, and as assistant vicar, Father Octavio Ortiz, replacing Father Manuel Barrera, who has requested permission to retire for a period.

It was also a beautiful ecclesial event, with a packed church, much affection for the priests, and great solidarity with the pastoral work of the Archdiocese. The three priests spoke, and all the priests of the Vicariate participated.

Monday, January 8, 1979.

Priestly Identity Week begins this morning at the San José de la Montaña Seminary. More than 70 priests are participating, some of whom have not excused their absence and will be invited back. They have been asked to remain for the entire week and to be punctual, as this issue profoundly affects our priestly ministry, so we can carry it out as God wants and as the Church needs at this time.

This is the basis of the investigation into the Archdiocese's pastoral policies and the Archbishop's behavior. The investigation was suggested by me and the Senate.Presbyterial It has been realized and will be studied in this priestly meeting from a sociological, theological and pastoral perspective, leading me to a priestly identity that truly guarantees the thought of the Church in our Archdiocese.

The participation in this day, the group reflections, and the plenary sessions were very promising from day one. The topic was explored in depth. The survey was sociologically read by Frs. Octavio Cruz and Walter Guerra, both sociology specialists and members of the diocesan clergy. Father Carlos Mejía, Bishop of La Asunción de Flor Blanca, presented the survey.

Father Astor Ruiz led the week on behalf of the pastoral commission. In the evening, Mass was celebrated at the Colonia Miramonte church, with the participation of all the parish priests of the Vicariates of Mejicanos and Zacamil. The parish priest of Zacamil also participated in the Mass of suffrage for Father Rogelio's mother.

CHAPTER 7.

Year 1979.

Diary from January 9th to 28th.

1979.

Tuesday, January 9, 1979.

That evening, in the Cathedral, we celebrated the Mass for Peace. Present was Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas, Bishop of Santiago de María, who is also president of the National Commission for Justice and Peace. This commission organized the evening, which turned out to be a truly splendid one, with the Mass celebrated with several priests

and Archbishop Rivera's speech, which was widely applauded, especially at the end, when, in conclusion, he reiterated the hopes expressed in the pastoral letter he and I published on grassroots political organizations and their relations with the Church.

The conclusions focused on supporting recent calls for amnesty for political prisoners, freedom of entry for those abroad, approval of the law on public order, and the release of kidnapped persons. The Cathedral was packed, and as we left, we shared moments of great cordiality with the faithful, who are demonstrating great faith in our Church.

Wednesday, January 10, 1979.

Today was the third day of the week ofPriestly identity.The central theme was addressed by Father Torruella, who offered a pastoral interpretation of the survey. The pastoral aspects were very interesting, and praised everyone's interest in seeking the Church's true position and in showing solidarity with the approach that, through a history of promotion, began to be pursued during the time of Archbishop Luis Chávez y González and has been continued by the current Archbishop. The plenary discussion also included: very interesting,test the argument on "the search for the true concept of poverty".

For my part,I gave my opinion.It seemed that everything was a matter of conversion, that the poor were those who converted to God and placed all their trust in Him, and that the rich were those who did not convert to the Lord and placed their trust in idols, namely: money, power, and earthly things. And that all our work should be to

convert ourselves and all men to that sense of authentic poverty. Because Christ said that the secret is that you cannot serve two masters, God and money.

In the evening, I attended dinner with the nuns of the Colegio de La Asunción. The community is also expanded by nuns from Santa Ana and Guatemala who have come to participate in a formation course.

Thursday, January 11, 1979.

In the week of identity ThisThe day is dedicated to summarizing pastoral work. The vicariate groups work together to find throughout theA summary of the richness of the previous three days to be presented to the plenary session. The session was extremely enriching, as abundant pastoral insights and suggestions emerged for living our priesthood in true identity at the service of our people.

I took advantage of the small group meetings to attend several audiences. The most important was the midday meeting with the Venezuelan Ambassador, with whom we spent a lot of time, reminiscing about my former Venezuelan colleagues whom I had met in Rome. Maybe we got along well more than in any other colony. The Ambassador also showed great interest in learning about the situation in our country and our Church.

In the evening I went to bless the house of Dr. Guerra, a dear professional friend of mine, who is celebrating his fourteenth wedding anniversary and, at the same time, his wife's birthday.

Friday, January 12, 1979.

We have reached the end of the reflection ofPriestly identity.Yesterday's plenary session continued at length this morning. After my participation, I took the opportunity to thank, congratulate, and encourage my dear brother priests. As the theme of my reflection, I took the various chapters mentioned in the Directory for the Ministry of Bishops, expressing to the priests my satisfaction in finding wonderful connections between the points that emerged from our reflection this week and the guidelines that, in the various aspects of episcopal ministry, our Holy Mother Church indicates to bishops.

I presented, as the Directory does, a perspective of the Church, according to which our priestly identity must be shaped. Then, I presented the office of teacher of the faith, which, together with priests, we must live, ensuring that our preaching and teaching are always the true doctrine of Christ.

As Ministers of the Liturgy, together with priests, we must sanctify and all our liturgy must be worthy and must respect the hierarchical sense and, therefore, obey the norms that make our worship, the administration of our sacraments, the celebration of our Mass, a true act of rational obedience to the discipline of the Church, always seeking the greater good and the edification of the people.

I have also spoken here of the rich popular religiosity among us, of our personal devotion, of our concern to know how we too can benefit from the sacraments in our individual lives.

The Bishop, as the center and Minister of the Hierarchical Society, which is the Church, as we priests together must care for all of God's people and feel deeply united. Here I have tried to emphasize the many reflections that have been made on the relationship between the bishop and the diocesan clergy, as well as between the religious clergy and the life of the diocese: the nuns, the laity, and all that constitutes the people of God. Let us work to increasingly unite them in the unity that Christ desires.

The Directory then introduces the bishop as president of the community of love and charity and speaks to us about how to promote a sense of Christian love and social justice. I emphasized how, in our time, we cannot ignore this aspect of our people's education; we must foster awareness and critical thinking among our faithful for a more just society, as God desires.

And finally, among the organizations that are the Curia, the vicariates, the parishes, among these entities, priests play a leading role, and I implore them to show their cordiality in serving the people and, of course, Our Lord.

We ended up at the altar of the Parish Church of San José de la Montaña around noon. This Mass, concelebrated with the entire presbytery, was deeply moving. At the end of the Mass, as a true celebration of our priests' mission in their parishes, they were granted ministerial licenses, after renewing the dialogue of our priestly ordination. We had lunch together, and a true sense of sacramental fraternity was felt, a true success of this week of reflection and spirituality.

After lunch, the vicars held their first meeting to organize the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, which was one of the most fruitful initiatives of this week of priestly

identity. Religious women involved in pastoral ministry, as well as lay people, will also be represented, and an Executive Secretary has been appointed.

Father Astor Ruiz, who will lead this archdiocesan pastoral commission or council, so necessary to coordinate the many pastoral resources and activities of the archdiocese.

A Norwegian journalist interviewed me, asking me questions for an article in his newspaper and on his country's radio station, on various topics related to the life of our Church and its relations with the people and the government.

That evening, in the Cathedral, we celebrated the Mass for Peace. Present was Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas, Bishop of Santiago de María, who is also President of the National Commission for Justice and Peace. This Commission promoted this evening, which turned out to be a truly splendid event, with the Mass celebrated with several priests and Archbishop Rivera's address, which was widely applauded, especially at the end, when he reiterated the hopes expressed in the pastoral letter he and I published on grassroots political organizations and their relations with the Church.

The conclusions focused on supporting recent calls for amnesty for political prisoners, freedom of entry into the country for those abroad, approval of the Public Order Law, and the release of kidnapped persons. The Cathedral was packed, and as we left, we shared moments of great cordiality with the faithful, who are demonstrating great faith in our Church.

Saturday, January 13, 1979.

There's a catechumenate meeting at the Franciscan Church in Planes de Renderos. I couldn't attend, so I devoted myself to personal reflection and work, as I didn't have time to attend during the week.

At noon I had lunch with Father Moreno and the bachelor Roberto Cuéllar, to prepare the report we give in the homily every Sunday.

Sunday, January 14, 1979.

The Mass in the Cathedral was well attended and included representatives of the foreign press. After Mass, I interviewed some of these journalists and then headed to Sant'Antonio Abad, where I celebrated Mass as part of the novena the community is celebrating in preparation for the patronal feast. I spoke to them about their efforts for unity and overcoming the difficulties they have unfortunately encountered in the past.

In the afternoon, I spontaneously went to visit the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas, in the parish of San Bartolomé Perulapía. I surprised Father Luis Montesinos, who was very flattered by my visit and introduced me through the microphone. At the pilgrimage, I had to say a few words, speaking about popular religiosity and taking advantage of these centers and popular devotions to grow in our faith.

That evening, I visited another shrine in our diocese, honoring Christ of Esquipulas. It was the parish of Colón, where Father Nicolás Menjívar had invited me to celebrate a Mass for the youth in honor of the Holy Christ. After the Mass, during which I addressed the large crowd that had packed the church to pay homage to the Holy Christ, we spent a very pleasant time with the pastoral workers.

On Monday the 15th, the feast of the Lord of Esquipulas, the Holy Crucifix is celebrated in the Parish of Aguilares under the title of "Lord of Mercies" as a patronal feast. At the invitation of Father Octavio Cruz and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, I presided over the Eucharist. Almost all the priests of the vicariate and many people participate, since they have a great devotion to the Holy Christ there.

I took the opportunity to explain a passage from the Letter to the Hebrews, which speaks to us of Christ's sacrifice and his entry as the redeemer and savior of humanity into the perfect sanctuary of heaven.

Among those present were many people who belong to grassroots political organizations, and I tried to provide them with guidance so that their organizations' advocacy efforts would not stray from their Christian meaning, but rather would seek it in the universal and profound redemption of Jesus Christ, that is, through liberation from sin.

Monday, January 15, 1979.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Tuesday, January 16, 1979.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Wednesday, January 17, 1979.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Thursday, January 18, 1979.

We had a working breakfast with the usual advisors, during which we focused, at my request, on some aspects of my participation in the Episcopal Conference of Puebla. We also briefly discussed the current situation in the country. These are extremely useful meetings, which I have somewhat neglected, but upon my return from Puebla I will increase their frequency.

The ecumenical week has begun. Baptists, primarily, and Catholics, with great enthusiasm, organized the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The opening ceremony took place that evening at First Baptist Church. I attended the welcoming ceremony to greet the large crowd. The theme was proposed by a Baptist pastor, who spoke of the Holy Spirit as a force of unity and how we should trust deeply in Him, asking for His light and strength for the goals of the ecumenical movement.

Friday, January 19, 1979.

This afternoon, we had an interesting meeting on the seminary issue. Six young men were identified by the formation team and, in their opinion, it would be best not to allow them to return to the seminary. However, the parish priests and the base communities, familiar with the work of these young men, oppose this judgment of the formation team and have asked us to intercede so that these vocations are not lost. The discussion was very interesting, and we are willing to preserve the vocations of these seminarians until proven otherwise.

Saturday, January 20, 1979.

An extremely tragic day. It began with the news of a military operation at the church of El Despertar, in the parish of San Antonio Abad. This house often hosts meetings to deepen one's Christian faith. Father Octavio Ortiz, along with Sister Chepita, as the Belgian nun who works there is known, led a Christian initiation meeting. About 40 young people were present.

But at dawn today, the National Guard, using force, detonated a bomb to break down the door and then entered with tanks and firearms. Father Octavio, realizing this, rose, but found only death, as did four other young people. The rest of the group, including the two nuns, were taken to the National Guard barracks.

We didn't learn of the murder of Padre Octavio and the other four youths until the afternoon, when the bodies of the Padre and the other youths had already been taken to

the cemetery morgue. Padre Octavio's face was extremely disfigured; it seemed crushed by an enormous weight that had fallen upon him. They took him to the La Auxiliadora funeral home, as well as the other three youths, since one of them had been taken in by his family, but the closest relatives of these three had not yet been identified. For our part, we took them to the funeral home to have them arranged, and then,we took them to theCathedral for the wake, where they would be recognized by their families and cared for.

At night, this tragic funeral procession was led to the Cathedral. There were many people. The Cathedral was almost full; they were praying fervently for the deceased and addressing the crowd with evangelical messages. I arrived around eleven o'clock at night. The crowd greeted me with applause. I led a prayer for Father Octavio and the other young people, and also spoke to guide us on how we would proceed the following day. I invited everyone to the eight o'clock Mass in the Cathedral, which all the priests would attend, abandoning their normal Sunday duties to participate in this concelebration for a fellow priest.

Sunday, January 21, 1979.

The morning was enlivened by a splendid celebration in the Cathedral. More than a hundred priests gathered around the coffin of their late brother, Father Octavio. The coffins of the other three young men, recovered by the Church from the cemetery morgue, were also present. The Mass was not celebrated inside the Cathedral, but was held in the street and in the park. At the beginning of the Mass, the hall was packed with people, a gathering that moved everyone, especially the participation with which everyone followed this prayer for the deceased.

A representative of the Bishop of Cleveland was at my side, as were other American priests. In my homily, I analyzed the crime of Father Octavio and his four fellow sacrificers. I called for the use of rationality rather than violence and force.

I protested this violation of the dignity of our Church. I recalled the penalty of excommunication imposed on the masterminds and perpetrators of this crime against the priest. Among the crowd were people from every parish in the Archdiocese, as well as representatives of many communities in other dioceses. The Father's coffin, along with those of the other young people, was brought back to the Cathedral after Mass, to continue receiving the affection of prayer and contemplation with which our faithful presented themselves before them.

The community of San Francisco, Mejicanos, asked that the body of the Father be buried in their church. And after discussing this situation, trying to avoid every provocation to a demonstration of violence would have been conducted privately.the body belongs to them,since it was ordered by a priest and he worked there for the five years of his ministry.

I was the one who ordained Father Octavio in 1974, commissioned by Monsignor Luis Chávez y González. It was March 3. By the afternoon, Father Octavio's body had already been transferred to his parish of San Francisco in Mejicanos, and I went to preside over the celebration. There were about 40 priests and the crowd was immense.

The road in front of the church couldn't accommodate the large crowd of people who had come from all over. Therefore, an open-air celebration was held, and after the Mass, the faithful continued their visit to Father Octavio, forming lines that stretched all

the way to the Mejicanos bus terminal. A truly splendid demonstration of solidarity, suffering, love, and dedication to the cause of Jesus Christ.

The crowd was extremely affectionate toward the priests and their bishop, greeting them with applause, hand kisses, and so on. I concluded this ceremony with great spiritual satisfaction. How people respond when they are loved! Father Octavio remained in the chapel until the procession of the faithful, still very numerous, had concluded.

Monday, January 22, 1979.

At 8:20 a.m., I took a Pan American flight to Mexico City to attend the Puebla meeting. At the Guatemala City airport, where we had a layover, we greeted some priests who were waiting for us and had a brief interview with a journalist. He was particularly interested in the statements of the President of the Republic of Mexico, who had just stated that there is no persecution in the Church in El Salvador. He also wanted details on the attack on the youth home where Father Octavio tragically died.

Still at the Mexico City airport, after learning of the arrival of the Archbishop of San Salvador, we were greeted by journalists, television reporters, and agents from La Prensa de México. They were also interested in the issue of the Church in El Salvador and its relations with the government, and where several inaccurate aspects of the President's statements in Mexico needed clarification. Confidentially, one of the journalists told me that President Romero's presence and, especially, his farewell to El Salvador had been very cold, "icy," the journalist said.

We were warmly welcomed by the Carmelite Sisters of Santa Teresa, who had already been notified of my arrival by the sisters of the same congregation at the Hospital of Divine Providence in San Salvador.

They met us at the airport and took us to their novitiate house in Colonia Santa María de la Rivera. I was accompanied by Father Jesús Delgado and Father Astor Ruiz; Father Rafael Moreno was also with me, but he left with his Jesuit brothers. We stayed in touch because he is responsible for reporting on Puebla and all the events of this trip to the Information Secretariat of the Archdiocese of San Salvador.

After resting a little at the nuns' house, I left with the other two priests for the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe,thus offering him IThe first fruits of this journey. It was six in the evening. A pilgrimage of people from the market was arriving, and I begged the chaplain of the Basilica to allow me to do so.to celebrate together with the other two priests, and the priest was very kind to allow me to participate in the celebration that had already been prepared to welcome the pilgrims.

That evening we spoke with Father Moreno, who came to my inn to tell me about the relationships he was establishing with bishops and other priests. I also received a phone call from the Bishop of Cuernavaca, Most Rev. Sergio Méndez Arceo, who informed me that he would be attending a meeting of the magazine and where we could talk. I told him I would be happy to speak with him too. He agreed to confirm my appointment early the next morning.

On the ten o'clock television that night I saw a piece of an interview they had done with me at the airport.

I also noticed that Cardinal Pironio had already arrived and had been interviewed. Father Moreno also told me that the bishops of Chile and others would be arriving that evening and that he would continue reporting.

Tuesday, January 23, 1979.

After a peaceful and restful night, thank God, I celebrated Holy Mass in the novice nuns' small sanctuary, where we also shared some brief reflections on the Word of God, applying them to this crucial moment for Latin America. I also asked them to be a living force in prayer, so that the meeting in Puebla and the Pope's visit to the continent would be a true Pentecost for our people, who have so much expectation from the Church.

I greeted the Provincial Father of the Dominicans, accompanied by Father José Luis, who is staying with them and came to help me with reports for our media, to bring our people authentic news of the Pope's arrival and, above all, of the meeting in Puebla.

With them, we went to obtain the credentials to become licensed journalists; the matter is handled in the office set up specifically for the Archdiocesan and Celam communications departments. At 11:30, I went to visit Monsignor Méndez Arceo, who invited me to his home where the magazine's editors meet.

Unfortunately I wasn't there, and already. At the end of my free time, I greeted him briefly. There was a sense of joy in meeting him and of mutual support in our role as pastors in a Church that seeks to be faithful to the Gospel of service to the poor.

He told me about his adventures as a pastor, his meeting with Pope John Paul II, and his joy at being able to serve God's people in this way.

In the evening I was invited to dinner at the Generalate of the Carmelite Sisters, and after dinner we watched on television some scenes of the preparations for the Pope's arrival.

That same evening I received a visit from two journalists with whom I spoke in more depth about my ideals as a servant of the Church and the problems this raises.

Wednesday, January 24, 1979.

I went to see the Mexico City Cathedral and the immense Zócalo square, where the Holy Father will meet with our Latin American peoples. The cathedral was being prepared with steps and additional seating in the choir stalls and in the main part of the church for the crowds who would attend the Mass celebrated by the Pope in the cathedral. At that moment, a beautiful choir was singing and rehearsing, accompanied by orchestras and an organ.

That evening, a press interview. Alan Riding had organized a group of journalists, or rather, advertising agency correspondents. We hadn't expected such a large crowd, but I was delighted to have about fifty journalists in front of me with their cameras, their photographs, and, above all, a series of very interesting questions, which I sensed expressed a particular sympathy for the Church, and the questions themselves were full of respect and sincerity.

I began by thanking you for this opportunity to amplify my voice on behalf of the voiceless and to make your messages known in the breadth of your message,at the thought of a Church that wants to be faithful to the Gospel.

I have briefly described the economic, social, and political situation of my country and how, in this challenging context, the Church seeks to carry out a prophetic mission, awakening the conscience of Salvadorans so that they are not a mass, but children of God, forming communities where true love reigns. Therefore, the Church denounces everything that destroys the dignity of the person and, above all, destroys the ability to build a people on the foundations of love, justice, and peace.

After the press conference, I was pleased to hear very flattering comments, and since many were unfamiliar with the situation in El Salvador, this interview clarified what the Church is doing in this difficult context.

That evening, we again had dinner with the superiors of the Carmelite Congregation, and there we watched, again on television, the Pope's final hours in Rome during his trip. The television invited us to keep watching, because it was 1:00 a.m. Mexico City time, they would broadcast the Pope's departure for America, directly to Santo Domingo.

Thursday, January 25, 1979.

In my brief homily at the Mass celebrated in the Carmelite novitiate, I recalled the events of these past few days: the Pope's visit to America, the bishops' meeting in Puebla, which begins today, and the prayer for Christian unity that has been taking place over the

past eight days, which, today, the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, concludes with special prayers to be held in the Cathedral of San Salvador. We therefore prayed extensively for these intentions, and above all, I asked them to pray for the meeting in Puebla.

It was the appointed day to meet in Puebla. A Carmelite nun kindly accompanied us from Mexico City to Puebla. At noon, we arrived at the home of a very hospitable Salvadoran, architect Gonzalo Yánez, who, with his wife María Teresa and their daughter, warmly welcomed us and treated us to a delicious meal.

Then, around five in the afternoon, they took me to the Palafox Piano Seminary, home of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate. I registered; they gave me study materials and placed me in room 325. There were already many cardinals, archbishops, experts, priests, and lay people there; there were deacons,Religious Goods.There was a good representation of our Church to discuss evangelization in the present and future of America. After completing the registration, I went out with Father Jesús and Father Moreno for a very pleasant stroll through the city center. We visited the Cathedral and then had coffee on the veranda.

Upon my return to the seminary, I met several bishops I knew: Cardinal Primatesta, a classmate of mine; the chancellor of the Diocese of Puebla, Father Miguel Navotrato, who welcomed me with a warm and fraternal embrace; the Bishop of León, Archbishop Salazar; the Archbishop of Panama, Archbishop McGrath; several Chilean bishops; and several other bishops I noticed had a special affection for me and my archdiocese. There are still many bishops I have yet to connect with, but this evening, at dinner, I had the opportunity to continue greeting, albeit briefly, others I have not yet met.

Friday, January 26, 1979.

This morning we had our first celebration. The Plenary Assemblies are held in the same building that also serves as the chapel: a large room parallel to the dining room of the Palafox Piano Seminary in Puebla. The entire day was dedicated to registration, preparation, getting to know the building, and, of course, connecting with the various participants. At the San José Hospital of the Josephine Sisters, there is an American Maryknoll priest who was in Opico. He came to greet me with great affection, and I promised him I would visit a sick colleague of his in the hospital.

Unfortunately, time constraints and my lack of familiarity with the city prevented me from conducting this interview. Father Jesús Delgado, who accompanies me as secretary, and Father Moreno, as information and press consultant, stayed at the home of architect Gonzalo Yánez, where his wife, María Teresa, was very kind in welcoming and assisting them.

Saturday, January 27, 1979.

The highlight was the pilgrimage we made by bus from Puebla to the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City, to concelebrate with the Holy Father. Reaching the Basilica, after a devout walk, reciting the rosary, and singing to the Virgin, was a very difficult arrival. We struggled along the wide Avenida de Guadalupe because it was packed with people awaiting the Holy Father's passage. The crowd welcomed us warmly, realizing we were the buses of the bishops gathered in Puebla.

The crowd fought more in the square and we had many difficulties, including having to jump over a wall so that all the bishops could enter the old Basilica where we put on our vestments for the celebration.

This unexpected operation delayed us, and when we arrived at the ancient Basilica, the Holy Father was already standing in front of it, dressed himself. He was transported in a specially prepared carriage on an open-top minibus with red trim; his white figure loomed large, waving affectionately to the crowd, who never tired of applauding him.

From the old Basilica, the procession of priests and bishops seemed endless among the crowd, already more organized for the passage of the concelebrants to the new Basilica. The applause and the songs, the emotion was growing up until this procession passed by, crowning the figure of the Holy Father in pontifical garb. In the Basilica, a very imposing choir welcomed the episcopal procession as the Holy Father entered.

They were placed on the presidential seats or on the chairs behind the altar and also filled the pews of the people, since the presence alone of the bishops of Celam and of all Mexico and other places, who came for this solemn inauguration of the episcopal meeting, occupied a large part of the Basilica itself dedicated to the people.

The Holy Father delivered a homily in honor of the Virgin Mary, highlighting the solemn inauguration of the Third Puebla Encounter. The address is included in the book published especially for Celam, which collects all the speeches given by the Pope during his pilgrimage to Latin America.

On my return to Puebla, on the bus I was traveling on, several bishops and priests from other countries testified to the devotion to the Virgin, so typical of our countries. I was very happy to be able to offer this testimony in honor of Our Lady of Peace.

Upon my return to Puebla, I went out at night to get tickets for Fathers Moreno and Chus Delgado and the family with whom they were staying to attend the Pope's mass in the seminary in Puebla, and I realized that there were already many people who had come from neighboring towns to await the arrival of the Holy Father and were sleeping on the sidewalks, while other Catholics who had come from further away or were more well-off, they parked their cars in places near the Seminary where His Holiness's mass was to be celebrated.

Sunday, January 28, 1979.

The entire morning is filled with anticipation for the Pope at the Puebla seminary, where bishops, priests, and participants in the meeting are already ready for his arrival. We had previously celebrated morning prayer and the Eucharistic concelebration, as Mass at the seminary will be celebrated exclusively by the Pope. The seminary's large sports field is completely packed. Experts estimate the crowd at around 150,000. Many Catholics have come from Puebla and the surrounding areas, naturally eager to meet the Pope.

Many who were unable to enter had the opportunity to meet and greet him along the entire route from Mexico City to Puebla, reserved exclusively for the passage of the Holy Father and his entourage.

The Pope came in the open minibus to greet all the people who came all the way on the highway. Naturally, this crowd grew in the cities and increased dramatically upon arrival in Puebla, and throughout the city all the way to the Seminary. In the Cathedral, people were eagerly awaited, the lights were on, but the Pope was an hour late and was deeply disappointed at not being able to accommodate the crowd, since one of his characteristics is to understand and seek to satisfy the people's wishes.

An hour later than expected, at 1:00 PM, the Holy Father arrived at the Seminary and, after donning his pontifical vestments, emerged amidst tremendous acclamations from the bishops, who filled the nave leading to the stage prepared for the celebration, and from the people standing on the other side, before the altar. The applause, the enthusiasm so typical of this city of Puebla, was wonderfully overflowing, even to the point of tears. The Pope, deeply moved, greeted everyone and began the Holy Mass. The Archbishop of Puebla, Monsignor Huesta, welcomed him, and the Pope began the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In his homily, the Pope addressed the theme of the family with very interesting social insights.

At the moment of the offering, it was deeply moving to see representatives of the indigenous peoples and their customs approach the Holy Father, bringing him the products of these fertile lands, flowers, and typical fruits. The Pope welcomed them with emotion and offered these offerings to the Lord, under the sign of bread and wine. It was unfortunate that no practical means of distributing Communion had been arranged, and so only a group of seminarians were able to receive Communion from the Holy Father.

In the seminary dining room, we had the honor of having lunch with the Holy Father. He seemed rather tired from the trip from Mexico to Puebla and from the celebration. He retired early to his room, which had been prepared for him, to rest a bit.

At four or five in the afternoon, in the Plenary Hall, we had the honor of listening to the Pope's message to the bishops gathered for the Third Conference.

It was the central address of the Pope's entire trip to the Americas, as this was the specific purpose of his visit and he had been expressly invited to do so. The Pope's message is also included in the book of speeches from his pilgrimage to the Americas and is a highly inspirational address for the Puebla meeting.

The Pope then greeted the bishops and began his private return to Mexico.

Accompanying the Pope was the apostolic delegate, Monsignor Prigione, nuncio to El Salvador, whom I had the pleasure of greeting. Vespers were presided over by Monsignor Héctor Santos, president of the Episcopal Conference of Honduras and Archbishop of Tegucigalpa. The working methods had already been announced, but it was also announced that the following day would be dedicated specifically to learning the system of...

CHAPTER 8.

Year 1979.

Diary from January 29th to February 16th.

1979.

Monday, January 29, 1979.

In Puebla, on the occasion of the Third Latin American Episcopal Meeting. At eight in the morning, we celebrated Lauds and the Eucharist, and then held the first plenary session to begin the work. Cardinal Luis Lordscheider, president of Celam and, at this meeting, also president, along with Cardinal Baggio and the Archbishop of Mexico, Archbishop Corripio, presented the meeting, its objectives, and the working document.

The Secretary General, Bishop Alfonso López Trujillo, presented the preparations that led to the drafting of this working document: the consultation with all the Episcopal Conferences, the consultation manual, the workbook, the meetings, etc. We have thus arrived at this moment, in which the assembled bishops will evaluate the pastoral work under the guidance of the Bishop.topic of: «Evangelization in Latin America in the present and in the future».

The Adjunct Secretary, Father Héctor Urrea, read the list of participants in the Third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops. Presided over by Cardinal Baggio and Cardinal Lordscheider, the Archbishop of Mexico and the General Secretary, Cardinal Landázuri of Lima, and Bishop Luis Manresa of Quezaltenango, served as vice-presidents. Those present included: Archbishop Luciano Cabral Duarte of Aracaju, Brazil, president of Celam's Department of Social Action; Bishop Francisco de Borja Valenzuela of Chile, president of the Episcopal Conference and president of the Department of Catechesis; Bishop Darío Castrillón of Colombia, president of the Department of Social Communication; Bishop Carlos Quinteros Arce of Mexico, president of the Department of Education; and Bishop Antonio Quarracino of Argentina, president of the Department of the Laity. Archbishop Romeu Alberti of Brazil, president

of the Department of Liturgy; Monsignor Roger Aubrie, Bolivian, president of the Department of Missions; Monsignor José Cotardi, Uruguayan, president of the Department for Religious; and Monsignor Román Arriete Villalobos, Costa Rican, president of the Department for Vocations and Ministries.

In addition to the departments, Celam also has sections, headed by: Monsignor Samuel Carter, from the Antilles, who is responsible for the Ecumenism section; Monsignor Ovidio Pérez Morales, from Venezuela, who is responsible for the Non-Believers section; and Monsignor Willer Ellis, from the Netherlands Antilles, who is responsible for the Youth section.

Also the Ecumenical Committee, under the presidency of Cardinal Luis Aponte Martínez of Puerto Rico.

So far, 19 cardinals and bishops have presided over this meeting, or have presided over or been responsible for various sectors of Celam.

Next, from numbers 20 to 187, are the bishops who preside over episcopal conferences or those elected by the conferences themselves as representatives of the various Latin American countries; some were appointed directly by the Holy Father. The list continues from numbers 188 to 211 with priests also representing their countries or appointed directly by the Holy Father. Next come four permanent deacons, and the list continues with religion, from numbers 216 to 235. These are religious representatives of the various regions of the continent or appointed by the Holy See.

From numbers 236 to 266, the list of lay men and women representing the various regions or approved by the Holy See. From numbers 267 to 271, the religious members

of the Latin American Confederation of Religious.Clear Follow the guests, starting with number 272: first the members of the Latin American Commission; then other dignitaries of the Holy See or pontifical superiors general, designated by the Holy See; representatives of the Episcopal Conferences of the United States and Canada, Europe, Africa, Madagascar, and Asia; representatives of the national episcopal organizations assisting the Churches of Latin America, up to number 329.

And finally, there are the Christian observers who are not Catholic, but who participate as observers. There are the Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, and Judaism; there are five observers. And finally, the experts, proposed by the Episcopal Conferences, and so on, up to a total of 350 participants. Anyone wishing to know the names, origins, and other details in detail can find them all in the archives of this meeting, as they are preserved in the archives of our Archdiocese.

When Cardinal Lordscheider presented us with the working document, he also presented a summary that will facilitate the work requested of us. This is a large sheet of paper, now familiarly known as a "folio." It summarizes the various themes and aspects of the working document, presented in groups, divided by topic, so that the provisional committees, in alphabetical order, can examine them.came forCompare it with the working document and see if they agree with the proposed topics or if they remove them or propose new ones; to open up some topics around which the final committees will be organized.

In my group, of course, there are surnames that begin with "R," including Archbishop Romero de Lima, Maximino, secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy; Cardinal Rossi, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples;

Archbishop Ladislao Rubin, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops; and Archbishop Andrés Rubio, a bishop from South America whom I met at a previous meeting.

A commission, called the splicing commission, will collect the fruits of this day's work, to definitively organize the outline of the document that we will have to write later, in the various commissions that have been established.will organize, according to the number of core groups and the themes that emerged from the day's work. Vespers were presided over by Monsignor Francisco Borja Valenzuela, President of the Chilean Episcopal Conference.

Tuesday, January 30, 1979.

At the Puebla meeting, this day was dedicated to hierarchical ministry, just as the previous day had been dedicated to the unity of the Church. Cardinal Angelo Rossi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, presided over the celebration of Lauds and the Eucharist. The recitation of the psalms and the celebration of the Eucharist were very devout and sublime, with the participation of the seminary choir and the nuns' choir. It was truly a celebration that filled the spirit and made God's presence felt in this meeting.

In his homily, Cardinal Rossi spoke of the hierarchical ministry and also focused on the Church's missionary task. The Plenary Assembly illustrated the working method, which will be led by two highly qualified experts.acquaintancesJesuit Father Manuel Vela, Colombian, and Father José Marins, Brazilian. They will organize the study commissions, according to the topics that will be discussed.underlined in theYesterday's work, and participants will be able to choose their committee based on their preferred

topic. However, in case changes are needed due to the number of participants, two additional ballots have been distributed so that, if you are unable to serve on your chosen committee, you can indicate which committee you would like to choose in second and third place.

In the afternoon, the committees were organized based on their preferences, and locations and topics for working were identified. The work of drafting the final document began, which will be the subject of four lengthy drafts. For now, attention is focused on identifying the various aspects of the topic to be addressed, taking into account the working document and any suggestions or initiatives that emerge within the committee.

This afternoon, which will conclude with a presentation of each topic, will be dedicated to this work. It will conclude with the celebration of Vespers presided over by Mr. Román Arrieta, a Costa Rican, who also spoke to us about pastoral work, especially vocational work.

Wednesday, January 31, 1979.

This day will be dedicated to religious life. For this reason, Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes and former General President of Celam, was a highly esteemed prelate at the Puebla meeting. His homily, with its characteristic anointing, encouraged a great spirituality of the Mystical Body of Christ, in which religious life is distinguished by its following of the Lord.

The study committees' work will last the entire day and will result in the first draft, so called because it is not a true draft, but rather an outline that will need to be developed during the drafting phase. The various coordinators will submit it to the coordination committee, which will formulate its observations and return it to the committees to refine a second draft.

The twenty-one commissions working on this first draft cover a variety of topics: the first, a pastoral vision of reality; the second, Christ at the center of history; the third, the Church; the fourth, human dignity; the fifth, evangelization: destiny and universal criteria; and the sixth, which I joined, this evangelization and human promotion. I would like to emphasize that in this sixth commission, among the 17 bishops and priests who comprise it, I had the pleasure of meeting Archbishop Helder Cámara and my dear friends Gerardo Flores from Guatemala, Domingo Roa and Constantino Maradei from Venezuela, and Manuel Talamás from Mexico.

The topic of our session is very important because it will study Liberation Theology.

The seventh theme is evangelization, culture, and popular religiosity; the eighth concerns evangelization, ideologies, and politics; the ninth, the family; the tenth, basic ecclesial communities, the parish, the particular Church, and the communion of the universal Church; the eleventh commission will study hierarchical ministry; the twelfth, consecrated life; the thirteenth, the laity; the fourteenth, pastoral care for vocations; the fifteenth, prayer, the sacraments, liturgy, and popular piety; the sixteenth, catechesis, witness, education, and the media; the seventeenth, dialogue for communion and participation; the eighteenth, the preferential option for the poor; the nineteenth, young people; the twentieth, action among those who build a pluralistic society; and the

twenty-first commission, which is the last, studies the theme of action with national and international society.

All of us who participated in the Puebla meeting are divided into these twenty-one commissions, studying, in terms of division of labor, the various topics that will form the final document.

Evening Vespers were presided over by Bishop Claudius Angénor, a black bishop of Haiti. In keeping with the day dedicated to men and women religious, he spoke about the Mystical Body and the various charisms that comprise it.

Thursday, February 1, 1979.

The day was dedicated to the laity and lay ministries. Morning prayer and the Eucharist were presided over by Cardinal Juan Landázuri, President of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference. Numerous representatives of the laity of Puebla were present in the chapel, and in his homily, Bishop Landázuri spoke of the immense potential the Church holds among the laity of Latin America. Work continued in the groups or commissions established yesterday to further study the document, divided into twenty-one commissions, which are the themes the document intends to address.

In the afternoon, we were free to attend to our personal affairs. I visited the Fathers accompanying Architect Yánez, and it was a relaxing afternoon. I also visited the Cathedral, where I unexpectedly met Father Ramón Vega, who expressed his desire to return to work in Nicaragua, in his diocese of León. The Bishop of León, Bishop Salazar, who was present at the conference, has suffered a relapse of diabetes and has been

hospitalized. His condition appears to be worsening, and there is even a risk of amputating his foot.

Friday, February 2, 1979.

It was called the Day of Reconciliation and Peace. A day on which the feast of Our Lady of Candelaria was celebrated, according to the custom of our peoples. A candlelight procession took place from the portico of the Seminary to the chapel, and Cardinal Avelar Brandau Vilela, president of the General Council of the Commission for Latin America, presided over the Eucharist. It was a very intense day of work. The various commissions advanced their drafts, which will be presented tomorrow, definitively, in their second draft.

Saturday, February 3, 1979.

It is a day dedicated to the family. It was impressive to see so many families in the chapel-spouses and children-coming to pray for the bishops, receive a message from the Latin American Episcopate, and pray for all the families of the continent. Cardinal Luis Aponte Martínez of Puerto Rico presided over the Eucharist, speaking beautifully of the mission of the family and the hope the Church places in it for the evangelization of the continent. It was a very intense day, with work to draft and present the second complete draft this evening. Vespers were celebrated in the afternoon by Archbishop Angelico Meloto of Guatemala.

I forgot to mention that in the last few days of this week I've had several meetings with journalists who wanted to ask about the situation of the Church and El Salvador. Some were on television on Channel 13, where the program "Seven Days" airs every evening, and others appeared in newspapers, not only in the United States, but also in Europe and the United States.

It has been very rewarding to be able to witness the life of my Church throughout the world.

Unfortunately, a statement by Archbishop Aparicio was also published on this day, accusing the Jesuits of the violence in El Salvador and denouncing their presence in Puebla to defend the Archbishop's position, which, according to the statement, is indefensible, as his actions even went so far as to personally insult the government. This is false, and the Jesuits, whose Superior General, Father Arrupe, is among us, have expressed their resentment at such dangerous publications, especially given the severe repression in El Salvador and the strong hostility toward the Church's work.

We have discussed this situation with Father Arrupe, and he will consult with his Jesuits, and we will reach an agreement; not so much to defend ourselves personally, but for the good of the Church and to avoid any danger this statement might unleash against the Society of Jesus.

Sunday, February 4, 1979.

It's the day dedicated to the Ministry of the Word, and in Puebla, they had the brilliant idea of accompanying the bishops to the various parishes of the diocese. It was

wonderful to see the vans arrive from each parish with groups of faithful, many of them young, to accompany the parish priests on visits and share the morning, the Eucharist, and lunch with the parishes visited by each bishop.

Monday, February 5, 1979.

The day is called "Day of the Beatitudes." Archbishop Ernesto Corripio y Ahumada of Mexico presided over morning prayers and the Eucharist. Then, we were explained the work to be done today, what they call "bars" (the work of the bars). That is, the various commissions will be distributed by delegation to other commissions, thus enriching the documents drafted last week.

We have in our hands a very thick file containing the twenty-one commissions that have elaborated their twenty-one arguments, and we must report on the various commissions. At noon, I visited the group of theologians at 14 Washington Street, available to the bishops, who provide us with valuable collaboration and theological advice.

The other evening I went to dinner with them, and Monsignor Helder Camara and other bishops were also there, who expressed their satisfaction with the selfless work of these priests and religious. This afternoon I also had a television interview for the great program, very famous in Mexico, called "24 Hours." They asked me about the situation in El Salvador and were interested in our meeting at the Puebla Seminary.

Today I spoke on the phone with Archbishop Urioste to ask him about the situation in the Archdiocese. Above all, I was interested in hearing the reaction to Archbishop

Aparicio's publications. Frankly, it's a shame because the Church is being exploited in El Salvador and the situation is dangerous for Jesuit priests. However, Archbishop Urioste announced that a meeting of the Clergy and the Senate will be held tomorrow to consider the measures to be adopted. I authorized them, inviting them only to avoid causing greater damage than the current situation.

He promised me they would be very calm and would always act in the best interests of the diocese and without compromising their bishop. He also informed me about the situation at the seminary. Thank God, the problems of the seminarians who had been eliminated have been resolved.

Tuesday, February 6, 1979.

We call this day "the day of the poor." Bolivian Cardinal José Clemente Maurer presided over the morning liturgy, which was attended by a good representation of the nursing homes where many poor people are cared for by the nuns. The day concluded with the conclusion of the committee meetings, thus enriching all the topics of the document. In the afternoon, the plenary session began, so that everyone could contribute to all the documents. At noon, I had a visit from very interesting journalists and televisions, they are generally inEurope and here in Mexico for the "24 Hours" program.

In the afternoon, the Bishop of Havana, Cuba, Monsignor Francisco Obes Fernández, presided over the liturgy. In the evening, the community of Puebla welcomed the faithful with great enthusiasm.

Wednesday, February 7, 1979.

A special day because we dedicated it to ecumenism. Among those present at the meeting were representatives of other Christian denominations as observers, including the Abbot of Taizé, who has become a dear friend of mine. The morning liturgy was celebrated by Cardinal Pablo Muñoz Vega, Archbishop of Quito, Ecuador. The entire day was very intense. There were plenary sessions in the morning and afternoon. There were numerous participants because no more than three minutes were allowed for each speaker. Concentrated many topics.Contributions also came from consultants who were not present at the meeting and who are providing an invaluable service.

In the afternoon, Vespers were an ecumenical celebration attended by ministers of other faiths, vested as priests, and the Eucharist was presided over by the Bishop of the Antilles, Bishop Samuel Carter. At noon, I also had interviews with journalists and learned that I had a press conference scheduled for yesterday. I thought it prudent not to attend because Bishop Aparicio's statement was so recent and I didn't want to conflict. For this reason, I postponed it until next Friday.

The Jesuit Provincial of Central America, Father César Jeréz, came to have lunch with him, as did our friend Julián Ludokoski from England, who, as a man who knows much of the South American episcopate, has provided us with valuable services in the field of journalism and has established relationships with other bishops.

Through Father Jeréz, I learned of the scandal caused in El Salvador by the news reported by Monsignor Aparicio and of the letter the province wrote to him, respectfully protesting and urging him to do something to avert the threat posed by his statements. I

know that within the Celam presidency, the Jesuit bishops, who are several, have requested an audience with Cardinal Baggio to explain this very distressing situation. Those who have spoken to me privately about this issue tell me that it was Monsignor Aparicio's downfall, as he made a terrible impression on that environment during the Puebla meeting.

For my part, I asked the Lord to raise us above these human miseries of the Church, and I communicated this today by transmitting by telephone to Ysax the dialogue that takes place every Wednesday (thank God, it has not been interrupted). I was interviewed by telephone from El Salvador by Father Sigfredo, who told me of his interest in knowing what work I was doing during the meeting, what the atmosphere was like here, and what my impressions were of Father Plácido's expulsion.

I have tried to convey a message of optimism and hope, despite all the difficulties. I also dictated the article for Orientación, titled "From Puebla to My Archdiocese," by telephone. May God bless this effort to leverage social media so that the Gospel message continues to inspire our beloved archdiocesan community.

Thursday, February 8, 1979.

We dedicated this day to homage to the Eucharist. Argentine Cardinal Raúl Primatesta presided over the morning address. The morning was entirely dedicated to reading to prepare the new draft of the document. The afternoon was free. In the afternoon, I had an interview with German television and the London Times, and I received an invitation to lunch with former Pio Latino companions, a special invitation

from the Archbishop of Mexico, my companion, Monsignor Ernesto Corripio, but special circumstances prevented me from enjoying this experience.

That evening, we dined with several bishops and theological advisors at 14 Washington Street. It was a great consolation for me to share with them the loneliness a pastor feels when he tries to be faithful to all the guidance given to us by the Gospel, Vatican II, and Medellín, and how companions like those who came with me from El Salvador to Puebla think differently. The testimony was well received, and Father Patiño suggested drafting a letter of solidarity for me and the bishops of Guatemala and Nicaragua who find themselves in similar circumstances. The idea was approved, and signatures will be collected from bishops wishing to express this solidarity.

Friday, February 9, 1979.

The eye discomfort persists. I thought it was a simple rash, but when I went to the optician, he discovered a small sore on my retina and prescribed eye rest and medication that forces me to keep my eye closed. I canceled other journalist appointments, and, thank God, the Josephine Sisters who run the San José Hospital welcomed me warmly, and I remained hospitalized all day Friday.

However, that evening, at seven o'clock, a press conference was scheduled, postponed from Tuesday, and with the optician's permission, I attended. It was a true tribute to my Archdiocese. I introduced myself, along with Father Plácido and Father Ortega, as witnesses to the expulsion of priests from my homeland. I invited them to share the pastoral experiences of an Archdiocese that knows how to bear witness to

suffering, as well as the fruitfulness of sacrifice. The questions were very interesting; the room was completely packed.

And at certain moments there was very enthusiastic applause; especially at the exit, when people shouted: "Nobel, Nobel." Many wanted to continue.private interviews.I tried to please them and then I returned to the hospital, where I received my first treatment.

Saturday, February 10, 1979.

I spent the entire time in the hospital. Resting my eyes and body was very beneficial.

Sunday, February 11, 1979.

Likewise, I was separated from the seminary meeting and found myself at St. Joseph's Hospital, where I attended community prayers and Mass.

Monday, February 12, 1979.

The doctor gave me the good news that the wound had healed, that he could uncover my eye, but continued with a course of eye drops and vitamins, and so I returned to the Seminary around midday.integrate back into the meeting of bishops.

The climate is quite optimistic regarding the documents that have already begun to be voted on, despite strong pressure from conservative bishops. However, we have a strong editorial and writing committee, which upholds the ideals of an evangelization closely aligned with the needs of our people. I have also seen the draft of the message to the people of Latin America; I was asked to share it on television and in the press. I had the opportunity to share very intimate moments with journalists and received very interesting questions.

I've become friends with most journalists. Even theologians.I had the rest of the impressions very helpful, those who came from El Salvador shared them very cordially this afternoon.

I started packing my suitcase for the return trip.

Tuesday, February 13, 1979.

We have reached the final day of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate. The morning was spent refining and finalizing the final text of the Document. Everyone is more than ready to prepare for the return journey. However, the drafters are working feverishly to ensure everything is completed by the afternoon.

The final plenary session will begin at 4:00 PM, during which the final points will be presented. These points, along with the first part, will be voted on after the Mass.

We left the plenary session already vested for the concelebrated closing Mass. Today, everyone wears the miters that Mexico has donned to all bishops. The Mass is

celebrated in front of the Seminary, as the congregation has been called together and enthusiastically welcomes the arrival of the bishops. The crowd is estimated at no fewer than 15,000. The biblical readings narrate the origins of the Apostolic College, of which we bishops are the successors, crowning that altar of concelebration. Cardinal Baggio's homily connects this reality to the prayers and requests of Christ in choosing his first twelve bishops.

At the time of the offering, the documents to be delivered to the presidents of the national Episcopal Conferences are presented as the fruit of the entire Conference. Each national president receives them on behalf of their country's Episcopal Conference and under the protection of the national title of Our Lady. In this way, the presentation becomes a true litany of Our Lady in Latin America. The people, in response to the invocation of Our Lady under these titles, respond: "Pray for us!" and the facilitator says: "Viva!" to each country.

At the end of the Mass, the assembly turns into a celebration. Candles carried by all the faithful are lit. The Archbishop of Puebla described this event as an Easter, in which Christ's candle illuminates the paths of America. Cardinal Baggio also recalled how the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus were carried in procession with candles when the divine motherhood of Mary was proclaimed.

In both comparisons, the Festival of Lights is intended to symbolize the faith of the people who accompany and encourage the ministry of the Latin American bishops. Then a shower of lights and gunpowder is unleashed, and there is a feeling of joy, greeting each of the bishops who now mingle with the crowd. Finally, a plenary session was held for the final vote on the entire text of the Puebla Document. The text was approved by a large majority.

In the dining room, farewells can also be heard, with Mexican songs very fitting for the moment. Many have already left with their families, who have adopted them to dine with them and then take them to Mexico or to the airport.

Journalists are anxiously awaiting the text, which has not yet reached the bishops, and are invited to stop by the following morning to collect it.

At the architect Yánez's house, I was warmly welcomed with dinner and a long conversation about memories of my homeland.

Wednesday, February 14, 1979.

Our return to Mexico was organized by the Congregation of the Carmelites of Santa Teresa, who sent their new van to transport us and accommodate us in the congregation's novitiate. The Superior General invited us to lunch with her.

We were also invited to a meeting of basic ecclesial communities, held at the Marist School, where nearly a thousand Christians, living the experience of basic ecclesial communities in various parishes across the country, gathered to explore this reality of our Church. I was asked to share with you the experiences of my Archdiocese. Together with Father Jesús Delgado and Father Astor Ruiz, we bore witness to the life and suffering of our Archdiocese.

Among those present were Father Ortega and Father Plácido, expelled from El Salvador, who shared this reality, which deeply touched those present. They offered me warm expressions of solidarity, and I left this fraternal meeting deeply encouraged.

Another bishop who had also been there expressed the reality of Guest Chile.

At night, in our accommodation, we received a visit from a group of young people expelled from the country who had occupied the Mexican Embassy. They were also visited by other compatriots who have long suffered the pain of exile in Mexico. We spoke at length to encourage them in their situation, and we saw that their spirits were very good and they remained optimistic. We tried to help the new arrivals who were in a hotel under Mexican protection, but only for 40 days, after which they will have to prove to the Mexican government that they are already working in the country to obtain legal status in Mexico.

Thursday, February 15, 1979.

Early in the morning, as I was getting ready to go visit this group of Salvadorans in exile, many of them came to tell me that, for their sake and mine, it would be better if I didn't go to the hotel. And that I would have preferred them to be grateful and that they accepted the help that had been provided to them and that, indeed, they would come to visit me later.

I also received a visit from Father Vicente Nieto, who assisted us in the formation of Father Elías Morales. We discussed the success or failure of this project, given that Father Elías has now left his ministry in the diocese of Santiago de María. With Father

Nieto, I went to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, where I calmly spent the rest of the morning in prayer, concluding with the celebration of Holy Mass.

And then a visit to my old friends from Tepito, as I call the adoptive relatives of the beloved and remembered Father Antonio Aguadé. We created so many wonderful memories. They offered me lunch and even a place to take a nap, and I returned underwater-thank God, I found a taxi-to the Carmelite nuns' inn.

That evening I visited the exiles again, to whom I tried to offer words of encouragement and the help that, to the best of my ability, I have been able to offer and will continue to offer, without any political prejudice, simply with a Christian sense of brotherhood and charity.

CHAPTER 9.

Year 1979.

Diary from February 16th to March 4th.

1979.

Friday, February 16, 1979.

I had breakfast at the Generalate of the Carmelites of Santa Teresa, where I also celebrated Mass. I spent the morning packing my suitcase for the return trip, and the brides of the Carmelite Novitiate also bid us farewell with affection, singing.

I mentioned in the previous post that on Friday, February 16th, I celebrated Mass at the Carmelite Generalate and packed my suitcase for the return trip from Mexico to El Salvador. The final moment was a tribute meeting with the novices, during which they sang several songs and discussed very interesting topics. A nun accompanied us to the airport, and we began our return journey, while many of those who had attended the Puebla meeting were looking for flights to various destinations across the continent and Europe.

On the Pan American flight, we had a smooth ride to Guatemala, where Guatemalan television granted me a brief interview, asking me about issues related to the Puebla meeting and the situation in my country. I arrived in El Salvador around seven in the evening. I was surprised by the attention I received at the airport, because a group of priests-Father Cortés, Father Víctor Guevara, and Father Fabián Amaya-were waiting for me at the foot of the plane steps and had a car waiting for me-Father Guevara's car.

The airport director himself asked for my passport to complete all the formalities and made the diplomatic lounge available to me. However, I saw a large crowd waiting for me at the airport, so I didn't take the car to leave immediately. Instead, I set off on foot to greet all my friends: religious, priests, and lay people, who welcomed me warmly. At the same time, they told me that there was a Mass scheduled at the Cathedral at 7:30, to which we had invited everyone present at the airport. I headed toward the Cathedral. The Cathedral was already packed, and when they noticed my arrival, thunderous applause and cheers broke out, which increased as the crowd grew.

I donned the sacred vestments to celebrate Holy Mass. Many priests waited for me to enter the entrance procession and begin Mass, while other priests and people continued to arrive.

At the Gospel, Father Cortés welcomed me warmly on behalf of the clergy and the people, receiving much applause, because he interpreted in a simple but moving way the sentiments of that crowded Cathedral.

In my homily I thanked them for this greeting and this welcome, and I referred to the theme of Puebla in these three points: first, because I was in Puebla representing a diocese in prayer, and I instilled much in them, just as I did inI was grateful TheA prayer that I felt so strongly, that they would continue to pray so that this would be the greatest strength of our Diocese: prayer. My second thought was that in Puebla I was bearing witness to a diocese following a pastoral approach very much in line with what I had studied in Puebla, and I referred to the numerous testimonies of the life of the Archdiocese that I had so clearly present at the Puebla meeting.

Here I expressed my gratitude for the pastoral work of the Vicar General, the Vicars, the parish priests, and the communities, who, during my absence, continued to lead a very rich ecclesial life. And I was happy to share the testimony of my Archdiocese in Puebla.

And the third thought: what I bring from Puebla to the Archdiocese: the experience, the richness, and the friendship of numerous pastors and dioceses from across the continent and around the world. People interrupted me several times with warm applause. At the end of Mass, I greeted the priests, almost all of whom were present, and

went out to greet them in the street amidst the applause of the people, because there were people right in front of the Cathedral. It was a very affectionate moment of greetings, hugs, and even kisses from some people, who welcomed me in a way that almost felt like being part of a family, a home where I felt so at ease!

Saturday, February 17, 1979.

I went to the Archbishop's Curia and there was nothing unusual. Business was proceeding normally. Several new developments occurred, and I stayed in touch. He was listed in Mexico.

In the afternoon, I prepared the Sunday homily. In the evening, at the invitation of the Sisters of the Assumption, I went to greet their Superior General, who is among us. And I bore witness to a congregation that is doing so much good for the Archdiocese. I also felt a very warm, very ecclesial welcome from these nuns who work at the Colegio of La Asunción and in the communities of marginalized areas and Chalatenango.

Sunday, February 18, 1979.

The Cathedral for the eight o'clock Mass was like every previous Sunday, full of people and I could. To present, among the biblical readings, the message of Puebla to the peoples of Latin America, I entitled my homily: "Christ, the ever new Word in the Church".

Based on the readings of Isaiah, St. Paul to the Corinthians, and the Gospel of St. Mark, the three thoughts I developed were: historical reality, God saves in history, and through the readings we see Israel leaving behind its story of the Exodus to refer to the moment of the history of Babylon. And how the Gospel also places Christ in a historical situation, the fight against the Pharisees. Thus the Church, living the history of the world, arrives in Puebla, where a historical event also occurs, which God's will seizes to make it a saving moment for Latin America.

The second thought is a reflection on history, a theology of history. In the readings from Isaiah and the Gospel, I referred to this reflection on history: how only the building of the Kingdom of God is worthwhile, but how men oppose it because of their sin. Here, the Puebla message served me wonderfully to see how denouncing sin in history is not just my preaching, but how all the bishops denounce so many sins in Latin America, especially the sin of social injustice.

And the third thought comes from reading St. Paul, in his Second Letter to the Corinthians: Christ is the permanent Yes of God and the Amen of men.

I tried to leave a message of hope, the one the bishops want to leave in the Puebla message, based on faith and hope in Christ, which always makes the salvation of peoples new. I invited us that we were trusted in Christ and that we open our hearts to hope and offer ourselves, each in our own profession, to work for a more just world, but with great trust in Jesus Christ.

In the afternoon, or rather, after Mass, I went to Tamanique, where Mother Juanita trained a group of catechists to authorize us to be Ministers of Communion. There were sixteen of them, and I took the opportunity to explain to the people the sacrament of the

Eucharist and also the charisms that God gives to the people of God. I encouraged families to cultivate priestly and religious vocations, and all the laity to seek their own charisms to serve the Church.

Afterward, we shared moments of great joy in a truly fraternal celebration. The communities shared thoughts, poems, and songs, and it was clear that people felt a sense of solidarity with their pastor. I felt part of a family.

Upon my return, I received the Superior General of the Belgian nuns at the Hospital of Divine Providence, accompanied by a counselor and two priests. I decided to intercede for Sister Chepita, who had been captured during the Awakening of Saint Anthony the Abbot and released, but in the custody of the Nuncio, to remain with us. The Vicar General intervened, at the appropriate time, with the government and the Belgian ambassador, and she would not be expelled, as the government had planned. However, the Superior General decided to take her with her, and although I did everything in my power to beg her to leave, the decision was made, and the trip will take place tomorrow.

That evening, Sister Chepita came to dinner to share her impressions. I tried to encourage her in her difficult obedience and to leave the door open to the hope that she would return to work with us.

Monday, February 19, 1979.

In the Curia, I find everything proceeding normally. There is a lot of pending correspondence, and this too is organized so that it can be examined and responded to.

That evening I celebrated mass at the Centro Ana Guerra de Jesús to inaugurate a new course to promote women in the market.

I also participated in the ultreya, where a group of Trainees warmly welcomed me and where I was able to express the opinion that some Latin American bishops of Puebla had expressed on the Christianity Course.

Many complain that they are too attached to their method and don't adapt to local pastoral care. And I told them that, for my part, I could testify that, although some have clung to the method and then distanced themselves from it, I have a determined group of Christians who have matured and identified with the Archdiocese's pastoral care. I congratulated them and encouraged them to follow this approach, which is the authentic one of the Church.

Tuesday, February 20, 1979.

In the morning, there were interviews with priests, several lay people, and some journalists. But, above all, in the afternoon I held a very interesting press conference attended by all the major media. I told them the main topic would be to inform them about the Puebla meeting, but then many questions arose about the situation of the Archdiocese and, especially, its relations with the government.

In which I have reiterated the Archdiocese's position that it is ready as a true Church to serve the people, for the things that concern God and that its relationship with the Government, as with any other organization in the world, will always be based on its mission as a Church.

This week's orientation will feature a version of this interview, which proved to be very friendly and interesting.

I later met people who had suffered in prison and who had miraculously managed to escape; they told me about their difficult situations and the hope the Church gives them when it stands with those who suffer.

At eight o'clock in the evening, I went to the Iglesia del Carmen in Colonia Roma, invited by a group of Marriage Encounters, where I also offered them a word of encouragement and explained that the Puebla message considers working with marriages and families a priority.

Wednesday, February 21, 1979.

Among the morning visits, the Dean and other staff members of the Faculty of Letters at the National University came to invite me to give a lecture on the Church in Latin America. I proposed that, instead of a lecture, we should hold a roundtable discussion, which they thought was very appropriate. They also authorized me to brief my staff on the same topic.

In the afternoon I received a visit from the Canadian Ecumenical Commission on Human Rights, who were very interested in learning about the human rights situation in El Salvador. Together I provided the Information Secretariat with a considerable amount of informational material. I also interviewed a Dutch journalist who was covering the same topic.

That evening, at the home of Doña Ana Margot Méndez, we had dinner with other Jesuit priests and discussed topics of great importance to the life of the Church and the UC.

Thursday, February 22, 1979.

Today, the first meeting of the Pastoral Council was held in the parish hall of San José de la Montaña. I was very excited to participate, but an unexpected circumstance prevented me from attending this vital meeting for the Diocese. I have entrusted the Vicar General, Bishop Urioste, and the Secretary of the Council, Father Astor Ruiz, with the appropriate direction of this new instrument of our archdiocesan pastoral ministry.

Unfortunately, many lay people who were supposed to represent their various vicariates were absent and a meeting has been scheduled for next month.

In the afternoon, I attended a spiritual retreat for the seminarians of Apulo. I celebrated the Eucharist in the courtyard in front of the church, where we shared, around the altar, in the light of the Word of God, our concerns regarding vocational ministry and the seminary. I was deeply satisfied by the trust and openness with which the seminarians expressed their concerns. This is a young man of great hope for our Archdiocese.

Friday, February 23, 1979.

A meeting to train catechists and promote the lives of Christians throughout the Vicariate of La Libertad concluded today at the Parish of Calvario in Santa Tecla. Father

Benito Tovar, Vicar of this department, and Father Xavier, Parish Priest of Calvario, concelebrated with me, as they led this course, which I found very fruitful, given the contributions of the participants during the Mass.

That same day, Mr. Zeledón from the Toyota dealership brought me the new car that I will exchange for my old one, which still has a somewhat high value and which I need for my ministry.

Saturday, February 24, 1979.

A meeting of the Confres (Confres) was held at the Colegio de La Asunción to learn about the results of the Puebla Episcopal Conference. All of us who attended this general conference took part, including Father Jon Sobrino, Father Jesús Delgado, Father José Luis Bourguet, and Father Francisco Estrada, President of the Confres. The turnout was extraordinary-I believe more than 300 men and women religious-and a very positive spirit was evident in the adoption of the document, the Puebla conclusions, and the meeting.to incarnate in pastoral care of our Archdiocese.

I am happy to say that Puebla was not a surprise for our Archdiocese, but rather that its pastoral guidelines, thank God, are in line with those we are following.

And so I encouraged them to remain faithful to communion with the Archbishopric and with the entire pastoral approach we inherited from Archbishop Chávez, which, thanks to everyone's commitment, is allowing our archdiocesan community and our parish, religious, and grassroots communities to thrive. I invited them to nourish the

Diocese with that irreplaceable strength: prayer and the witness of a consecrated life that is a faithful image of Christ's presence among us.

Sunday, February 25, 1979.

Mass in the Cathedral has always been well attended and lively, with truly liturgical, vibrant, and ecclesial participation. Christ's response to the objection that his disciples do not fast, while those of John and the Pharisees do, inspired me to choose the theme of my homily: "Christ, Spouse of the Church." Speaking of that newness, that joy, that enthusiasm, the hope that...Christianity gives, when we have faith that Christ lives with all his love in our Church.

After Mass I received many visits from people from the village, who always rushed to chat, even briefly, with their bishop.

I had lunch with the nuns of the Sagrada Familia College. In the afternoon I attended the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the parish of Zacamil at the Externado San José. Their work with the basic ecclesial communities seems very fruitful, as the large crowd that filled first the theater and then the church at the Externado San José. It demonstrates the strong awareness of Christian and community life among the parishioners of that parish, attended by communities from different sectors of the archdiocese.

That evening, I went to the Church of San Jacinto for the installation of the new parish priest, Father Eduardo López Molina, who will replace Father Bobadilla, who is moving to Ilobasco. I spoke of the long tradition the Pauline Fathers are establishing in

this parish of San Jacinto. I thanked them and urged them to continue bestowing upon us the rich charisms of St. Vincent de Paul in this area of the Archdiocese.

I greeted the Sisters of Charity with great affection in their old women's home, which reflects the many merits of the nuns who have dedicated their lives to Christian charity. The enthusiasm of the faithful, especially the children who approach the Bishop, also demonstrates the pastoral care of that sector.

Monday, February 26, 1979.

This afternoon I presided over the Mass in suffrage for Don Abraham Rodríguez, an old friend from San Miguel, the father of a nun of the Sacred Heart.

There were about fourteen priests who concelebrated, which shows sympathy for this family.

That evening, I received a visit from a young entrepreneur, whom his mother had introduced to me a few days earlier. He spoke to me about the concerns of young entrepreneurs like himself and about the dialogue with the Church regarding the country's difficult situation. I saw a sign of rapprochement that I was very pleased with, and naturally, I accepted the invitation and agreed to a meeting.will have in this same week.

Tuesday, February 27, 1979.

I had breakfast with Monsignor Urioste and Father Brito to discuss the functioning of the Curia during my absence. Engineer Galván was also present to assess the progress of the Curia's organization. Father Astor Ruiz was also present to provide an account of his work in the Pastoral Council office.

I had lunch with the ladies of the Archdiocesan Caritas and its coordinator Father Tilo Sánchez, and other friends of Mrs. Trigueros, in the Colonia San Benito, where we shared a very Christian sense.

In the afternoon, at the "María Eugenia" house of the Sisters of the Assumption, in Planes de Renderos, I attended Holy Mass, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the religious life of one of them. I spoke to them about the relationship between hierarchy and religious life. And then we… shared a friendly one small family party. All the nuns of the Republic were there, and I could see the deep affection they felt for their parish priest. I thank them for this.

Wednesday, February 28, 1979.

It's Ash Wednesday, and the main liturgical event was the inauguration of Lent at 7:30 PM in the Church of the Heart of Mary. The Vicariate of this residential area of San Salvador had invited me to celebrate the inauguration of Lent with them, and I took the opportunity to invite the entire Archdiocese and give the ceremony a diocesan atmosphere. This contributed to the church being completely packed and the fervor that comes from the faithful's participation.

All the priests of the Vicariate concelebrated, and the penitential ceremony of the ashes was deeply moving. The people of that area, along with the humble residents of the city, received this testimony of true humility and human equality that the ashes and the meaning of penance represent. General absolution followed, with admonitions and a homily that reminded them of the meaning of conversion to which the Church calls us. All of this contributed to a very fervent beginning of Lent. I hope, with God's grace, that it will be showered with many blessings for the entire Archdiocese.

Thursday, March 1, 1979.

The morning was filled with a wealth of interviews at the Archbishop's residence. One of the most interesting was that of the catechumenate group, who come to work with the catechumenal communities already existing among us.

In the afternoon, the traditional Holy Hour will be held at the Hospital of Divine Providence.

I had dinner with Bishop Rivera, with whom we spoke primarily about our hierarchical life in El Salvador and the celebration of the Puebla Conference. We also discussed the upcoming visit, on March 10, to San Miguel, where all the bishops will bring the Puebla document to Our Lady of Peace. We agreed to bear witness to unity, while also expressing our dissatisfaction with the anomalous behavior of the Episcopal Conference.

I had a very productive conversation with Dr. Semsch about my psychological health. That evening, I met with the young entrepreneur, Mr. Muyshondt, to schedule a meeting the following day at his home in the San Benito neighborhood.

Friday, March 2, 1979.

Another busy morning at the Archbishop's Palace. At breakfast, Mr. Sigfrido Munés,breakfast withWe discussed the country's situation and possible dialogues that could make the Church a valuable collaborator in this difficult time. We agreed to meet the following day with Monsignor Urioste, Dr. Chávez of the Christian Democrats, and Mr. Munés.

In the afternoon, the meeting with the entrepreneurs promoted by Mr. Muyshondt was very positive. For our part, I was accompanied by Monsignor Urioste and Father Ernesto Abrego, parish priest of San Benito. I invited everything, exposed what they had against the Church to vent every resentment, every air of separation and they were very frank.

It gave us the opportunity to defend the Church's position and, at the same time, to demonstrate that, where they were right, we were willing to accept the truth. Ultimately, a very positive atmosphere was created, as we agreed to meet within two weeks.

That evening, at the El Despertar retreat and fellowship center in San Antonio Abad, where Father Octavio and four young people were tragically killed, we celebrated the Eucharist, with the presence of numerous communities, on the fortieth day of the tragic death of our brothers and sisters. The gathering and the participation were

beautiful. At the offertory, four bouquets of red flowers were presented to the four mothers of the four young people.

The same was said to Father Octavio's father, who was present, which moved the crowd. In my homily, I also thanked the families for giving us these temples for young people, whom God has chosen to offer the supreme testimony of love.

Saturday, March 3, 1979.

Consultation breakfast with Monsignor Urioste, Sigfrido Munés and Dr. Chávez. A very interesting discussion on the country's current situation and the possibility of a dialogue that seeks the good of our people. I was assured that, given the moral reputation I have achieved, nothing is compromised by sincerely seeking dialogue, in a private setting, with the government. For my part, I insisted that the path of dialogue between groups in the Church, the capital, and the government seems most appropriate in preparation for the aforementioned dialogue.

At noon, a family visited me and told me about a son who had been captured near the San Carlos barracks and then taken to the police or National Guard barracks. He had been cruelly tortured and taken to the hospital. I went to the hospital and saw that his condition was extremely serious. Or rather, in agony.

I have seen, once again, how little respect there is for men in our national situation! I have made a point of denouncing this case in my homily tomorrow.

I spent the afternoon and evening preparing the homily.

Sunday, March 4, 1979.

First Sunday of Lent. The theme was: "Lent, Renewal of Our Covenant with God." After this Sunday's readings, I spoke about the history of the covenant. Christ, the key to our covenant, and baptism, humanity's incorporation into God's covenant.

I urged everyone to prepare for a worthy Easter celebration, as this is the purpose of the Lenten celebration. At the end of the doctrinal portion of the homily, the power went out, and I had to interrupt the homily to continue Mass. After Mass, after I gave the blessing and told those who wished to remain that they would listen to the news and complaints, almost the entire Cathedral remained in place until they heard the final announcement and departed with me for the farewell salute at the Cathedral door.

In the afternoon, I traveled to San Antonio Abad. I met with the main leaders of that community, and we thoroughly analyzed the situation, examining with absolute sincerity the errors that may have led to such grave tragedies. We discovered that the reckless intermingling of politics and pastoral care is extremely harmful, and we agreed that all pastoral workers must fully respect their pastoral work, without engaging in political organizations.

In the afternoon, the homily was broadcast on the radio, just as it was recorded, allowing those who had missed it in the morning due to a power outage to listen to it.

CHAPTER 10.

Year 1979.

Diary from March 5th to 14th.

1979.

Monday, March 5, 1979.

From today until Friday, March 9th, I attended the retreat at the "María Eugenia" house of the Sisters of the Assumption, along with twenty other priests. The retreat was led by Father Fermín Aranguren, a Redemptorist, assisted for two days by Father Fabián Amaya. Both offered us very precise, timely, profoundly spiritual, and timely guidance.

The group is united in a pleasant unity, and the reflection was profound. These were truly priestly spiritual exercises, of great benefit to our ministry! Thank God!

During the spiritual exercises, we attended the clergy meeting held on Tuesday at the Domus Mariae, where the Puebla document was presented and some practical advice was given for the life of the diocese, especially during Lent and Holy Week. That same Tuesday evening, I presided over the inauguration of the Faith Formation course organized for the second year at the La Asunción vicariate, Flor Blanca, in the parish house of the Parish of the Heart of Mary.

This year, two courses will be offered, as the second one will be held. Last year, the priests of that vicariate initiated this current idea, united for a pastoral ministry more in tune with our times. Finally, the Cultural Attaché of the United States Embassy offered to collaborate with me on a more accurate recording of the Cathedral homilies, which I accepted and for which I am grateful.

From Tuesday, May 6th to Thursday, May 8th 1978.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for this date. His absence remains as it appears in the original transcripts.

Friday, March 9, 1979.

After the afternoon spiritual exercises, I had to focus on helping resolve the strike in La Constancia and La Tropical, which has been going on for several days without a solution to the labor problem.

At the invitation of the Episcopal Conference, I participated in the presentation of the Puebla document to the Virgin of Peace, in line with the initiative launched in Puebla to bring this document to the patron saints of all the countries of the Americas.

I had invited the clergy, religious, and faithful, and a large number of us gathered at the Church of the Rosary and from there we headed to the Cathedral to participate in the solemn celebration. The diocesan priests were the largest: eighty. The ceremony had been organized by the leaders of the Episcopal Conference. My exclusion from the ceremony

was clearly evident.an unexpected gift paid homage to motivation as I left, for which I was deeply grateful.

As the entrance procession arrived, Archbishop Aparicio explained the purpose of the celebration. Archbishop Revelo presented a summary of the document, following the Gospel. The Nuncio, who presided over the ceremony, concluded with a few words on devotion to the Virgin Mary and evangelization in Latin America.

At the Calvary Convent, Monsignor Pablo Castillo and Father Villacorta had prepared, at my invitation, a lunch that turned out to be a real feast for all the priests of the archdiocese.

On their return, they received news that they had called us several times regarding the conflict in La Tropical and La Constancia. And together with Father Rafael Moreno, we tried to help as much as possible throughout the afternoon, inviting management and workers to dialogue. We worked until late at night. Father Moreno continues until the early hours of the morning.

But all that was achieved was a suggestion: the possibility of dialogue should not be ruled out, but at least the employers' and unions' parties should meet to discuss how the dialogue could take place.

Which is already a sign of hope, given the very difficult context, since even the factory where the strikers are located has been surrounded by a strong military cordon with all kinds of weapons, and we are concerned about the tragic outcome these events could have.

Saturday, March 10, 1979.

At the invitation of the Episcopal Conference, I participated in the presentation of the Puebla document to the Virgin of Peace, in line with the initiative launched in Puebla to bring this document to the patron saints of all the countries of the Americas.

I had invited the clergy, religious, and faithful, and a large number of us gathered at the Church of the Rosary and from there we headed to the Cathedral to participate in the solemn celebration. The diocesan priests were the largest: eighty. The ceremony had been organized by the leaders of the Episcopal Conference. My exclusion from the ceremony was clearly evident.an unexpected gift paid homage to motivation as I left, for which I was deeply grateful.

As the entrance procession arrived, Archbishop Aparicio explained the purpose of the celebration. Archbishop Revelo presented a summary of the document, following the Gospel. The Nuncio, who presided over the ceremony, spoke at the end, speaking about devotion to the Virgin Mary and evangelization in Latin America.

At the Calvary Convent, Monsignor Pablo Castillo and Father Villacorta had prepared, at my invitation, a meal that turned out to be a real feast for all the priests of the archdiocese.

On their return, they received news that they had called us several times about the conflict in Tropical and La Constancia. And together with Father Rafael Moreno, we tried to help, as best we could, throughout this afternoon.inviting you to start a dialogue with both employers and workers.

We worked like this until late at night. Father Moreno continued until the early hours of the morning. But all that came out was a suggestion: don't rule out dialogue, but at least bring together management and workers to discuss how to do so. This is already a sign of hope, given the extremely difficult context, as even the factory where the strikers are located has been surrounded by a strong military cordon with all kinds of weapons, and we are concerned about the tragic outcome these events could have.

Sunday, March 11, 1979.

From the beginning, Father Moreno and I have sought to continue our collaboration. The Human Rights Commission, for its part, is pushing for this solution to materialize. In Sunday's homily, after the doctrinal point on Lent as a renewal of the People of God, I referred to the various examples of our situation, prioritizing the strikes at La Constancia and La Tropical.

Father Moreno remained alert for any calls, as I had to go to San Pedro Perulapán, which I couldn't do due to traffic congestion caused by the strike. So I had to authorize the Vicar of the Cuscatlán department, Father Montesinos, and the parish priest of San Pedro Perulapán, Father Solórzano, to allow them to reach the administration. The confirmation of the youth and children who had been trained in the capital, our mediation, along with other activities, succeeded in re-establishing dialogue, which lasted from this afternoon and, I believe, through Sunday night.

Monday, March 12, 1979.

I celebrated Mass at the Cristóbal Colón School, which today inaugurates Josephine Week. It was a splendid display of youth. I spoke of Saint Joseph as the just man, that is, the man who understood his vocation in life and sought to place himself in the place God assigned him throughout history, and that this is the vocation of every young person: to discover God's plan and each person's place in that plan.

At noon, I had lunch with the minor seminarians of Chalatenango, where we shared the Eucharist and had a very constructive discussion about their vocation. The Sisters of the Assumption and the Bethlemite Sisters, who work in that department, were also present.

In the afternoon, I attended a meeting in San Antonio Abad with community leaders from these various sectors. We discussed at length in the light of the Word of God, and I believe we gained renewed courage to continue, despite the very difficult situation that remained after the assassination of Father Octavio and the events of Despertar.

That evening, talks continued regarding the strike at La Constancia and La Tropical. I personally took with me a worker who is part of the Negotiating Commission. I took him to the Red Cross where both sides were negotiating, since this young man was a member of the commission but didn't have the confidence to go alone.

Tuesday, March 13, 1979.

This day was very intense. In the morning, negotiations continued to await an agreement between the employers and workers of La Constancia and La Tropical. The negotiations lasted all day, until about six in the evening. Meanwhile, at noon, I recorded my work for Wednesday's program and went to lunch at the invitation of a women's group from Colonia San Benito. We had the opportunity to exchange opinions, and I was pleased with the spiritual concern that the Church's preaching had awakened today.

I think it's a wonderful opportunity to evangelize this very difficult sector of the Diocese. And through a group of evangelized and well-intentioned women, like those who were at lunch today, I feel that I could take the word of God in many other houses.

In the afternoon, I met with the printers, who expressed their desire to unite and promote Christian activism. At the same time, they reported some anomalies in the workshop to me.

Two young people also arrived from the audience to discuss concerns about their ideologies of violence, which they refuse to renounce, despite my efforts to present the power of Christian love. They believe that only violence can resolve the current injustices in our country.

At the Nuncio's invitation, I went to the Nunciature, where he offered his assistance regarding the strike. I took advantage of this kindness to thank him and inform him that there was a threat that, at midnight, the La Constancia and La Tropical offices would proceed with force, which could bring many misfortunes. And since the

negotiations were about to conclude, he could have begged the President of the Republic to ask the security forces to refrain from any violence and to be patient so that the negotiations could conclude peacefully.

This evening I had dinner at the home of Engineer Girón and his wife María Elena, where there was no special occasion, as they were willing to offer a completely relaxed atmosphere.

But, having returned home at 8:30 pm, we still had to speak with the lay representatives of a rectory that strongly promotes grassroots communities, and we discussed at length this evangelization based on small communities, asking for their collaboration, even in front of the parish priests, to inspire their benevolence and cooperation.

I learned that everything had been resolved in the conflict surrounding the La Constancia strike, and I thanked God through the radio, our Radio Ysax, and also through an interview requested by Radio Sonora. On both stations, I commented, thanking the goodwill of both parties, congratulating them on their capacity for dialogue, and emphasizing, at the same time, that an effort was needed to remove the roots of this situation, which could lead to new conflicts if not...fix the root of these situations.

Wednesday, March 14, 1979.

I was informed that the evacuation of the strikers and others who had accompanied the workers from La Constancia and La Tropical was significantly delayed. Only at dawn

were they received in the hall of San José de la Montaña, where the workers had asked to be taken out of trust in the Church.

I regret that the priests requested by the workers for their protection did not receive the attention they deserved from the security forces. Father Cortés and the assistant priest at El Calvario, who were supposed to carry out this task, were not allowed to enter the premises, nor to disembark from the Red Cross bus, nor to open the windows for fresh air. And they had to wait there through the long hours of the night, almost until dawn, when...they took to theHall of Saint Joseph of the Mountain.

In the afternoon I visited and celebrated Mass at the novitiate of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart in Colonia Costa Rica.

CHAPTER 11.

Year 1979.

Diary from March 15th to April 10th.

1979.

Thursday, March 15, 1979.

I had breakfast with the parish priests of the capital, with whom I have to coordinate some activities for the upcoming Holy Week, to unify some events and agree on a common celebration.

Above all, we agreed to unify Palm Sunday between Calvary and the Cathedral; to give greater pastoral attention to the Silent Procession of the Conception, since it is a huge mass that no one controls. To this end, he will give a speech at the beginning, and Radio Ysax will continue to broadcast an event, inviting other parish priests to organize events during this period, whether a Silent Procession in other parishes or some other event that brings people together, to ease the congestion and take advantage of the opportunity to reflect on Holy Week.

Likewise, we will broadcast the Holy Burial procession on the radio for all parishes that wish to benefit from this broadcast. I have insisted that we give full importance to the Easter Vigil and that it will be celebrated, especially by the communities and young people, because we will do it soon, at seven o'clock this evening in the Cathedral.

Because I wasn't feeling very well that day, I canceled lunch with Father Pepe Simán and the trip to Monte San Juan, where I was supposed to swear in the new parish priest, Father Benjamín Rodríguez. I feel like these cancellations don't satisfy me. I'd like to keep my promises, but sometimes my health fails me, and perhaps a little negligence on my part adds to this.

In the evening, however, I had a very lively and friendly meeting with the young people of the Archdiocesan Minor Seminary in San José de la Montaña, which lasted about two hours, during which the young people expressed very interesting concerns, appropriate to their age and vocation.

Friday, March 16, 1979.

For the same reason, I canceled my planned visit to the village of Paraíso de Chalatenango, where the Bethlemite Sisters were so warmly awaiting me. They had prepared a special gift for me, but I promptly let them know that I could not attend and that the Vicar General would be attending in my place. It was a meeting of pastoral workers from across the vicariate, and I know it went well, even though I didn't attend in person.

In the afternoon, together with the other priests who had accompanied me to Puebla, we informed the major seminarians of the archdiocese of this event and began a dialogue that proved very interesting.

Subsequently, we attended a second meeting with other young entrepreneurs. They expressed their hope in the Church and also their concerns about the difficult times the country is going through.

In the evening, I visited the Atlacatl colony, where a catechumenal group is being developed within the parish. I spoke to them about the need for this biblical outreach, but at the same time, I will try to adapt to the pastoral care of the local Church, thus demonstrating the authenticity of its Catholic intentions.

Saturday, March 17, 1979.

In the morning I received a visit from English television with whom I had a short conversation and, at the same time, I was being photographed for that television, on the situation in the country and in our Church.

This morning, we also prepared, with Father Jesús Delgado and Father Octavio Cruz, the round table discussion he will chair at the National University on the theme "The Role of the Church."in AmericaLatina».

In the evening I celebrated the baptism of a nephew of Dr. Semsch during the hospital mass.

Sunday, March 18, 1979.

This was a rather busy Sunday. After the usual Mass in the Cathedral, which, as always, is a deeply comforting event for the pastoral life of the Diocese, I went to San José Villanueva, in anticipation of the feast of its patron saint, Saint Joseph. There I celebrated a beautiful service prepared by the Passionist Sisters, who care for that town, and by the parish priest, Father Benito Alfaro.

In the mid-afternoon, we visited the community of the Canton of San José Cortés in Ciudad Delgado. This too was a very large and enthusiastic community, where I celebrated Mass and then spoke with the pastoral workers.

There are numerous catechists, a good number of whom offer great pastoral hope in this sector.

And that night I was at the parish of San Francisco de Mejicanos to swear in the new parish priest, Father Rafael Palacios, who will fill the void left by Father Octavio Ortiz, who, as you know, was murdered in El Despertar, in San Antonio Abad.

From Monday 19th to Friday 23rd March 1979.

I went to the Dominican Republic because a seminar on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was being held in Santo Domingo, sponsored by an international institute that organizes such events worldwide. Father Santiago Garrido, director of the Apostleship of Prayer, was also from El Salvador. It was a very useful seminar in terms of theological, biblical, and pastoral knowledge, especially in the dialogue with the other participants from various Central American countries and the continent. We explored how to make this devotion appealing to today's audience. This devotion, undoubtedly still relevant, is considered by some to be obsolete, perhaps because it has not been sufficiently modernized.

However, in light of these reflections, we have understood the need to restore its rightful honor. To this end, we Central American participants have organized a small committee that, in collaboration with the International Center, will seek ways to realize these ideals of renewing devotion to the Sacred Heart in our countries. I was honored to be appointed president of this small Central American group. I gladly accepted because it has always been my favorite devotion and because I know that this devotion to the Sacred Heart will bear much fruit for the pastoral care of our dioceses.

The seminar was held at the Jesuits' Loyola House, a picturesque seaside location. I also had the opportunity to present the situation of the Archdiocese, a topic of great

interest to seminarians, religious leaders, and some local media, including television, which will one day broadcast its own daily newscast. Father Arango, a Jesuit who hosts a Sunday program, dedicated his program to a dialogue with this servant.

Saturday, March 24, 1979.

Today we met with Father Moreno, Father Fabián Amaya, Father Walter Guerra, and Doris Oseguera, a meeting that will now be held every Saturday to orient the media's ideology. This meeting is also very interesting for my government, as we analyzed various aspects of the week and the impressions our radio and our Orientamento are generating.

In the afternoon, in Suchitoto, we celebrated the priestly ordination of Deacon Ezequiel de Jesús Gámez, in the presence of several priests. The Mass was held outdoors, in the church atrium, and was very moving and enjoyable. Among the numerous communities present, the one from Chalatenango stood out, as Father Gámez, although originally from Suchitoto, joined that community and formed a sort of alliance with it to continue cultivating his priestly vocation.

Sunday, March 25, 1979.

After Mass in the Cathedral, I attended the 25th anniversary celebration of the minor seminary of Santa Ana, now known as the Juan XXIII Seminary. I was invited by Bishop Barrera, and the Nuncio and many priests of the diocese also attended. The Mass was held at noon. Among the crowd, I could hear chants of "Monsignor Romero," which

greatly concerned me, so as soon as the Mass ended, I tried to escape to avoid any disturbance.

Furthermore, in the host city, I had my own concerns to address, as serious work-related problems were being resolved there, for which they often turned to the Archbishop's office. The main problem arose at the Delicia factory, where among the hostages was a professional whose mother had died, and they wouldn't let him out. They interceded for him, but unfortunately, they couldn't.it could have been what was desired.

Monday, March 26, 1979.

We met again for breakfast with the priests with whom we had planned the upcoming Holy Week. Father Gutiérrez has taken the organization of Holy Week very seriously and, thank God, has already presented some projects, and now we have finalized the celebration.

At noon, we had lunch with all the staff of the Archdiocesan Curia, priests and lay people, to foster closer human relationships. The conversation we had before and during lunch was truly warm, and I am delighted to be able to establish more human and Christian relationships in such an important role for the entire Archdiocese.

This afternoon, I spoke with two guerrilla fighters, with whom I tried to support the Christian idea of nonviolence. However, these people are firmly convinced that it is not the power of love that will resolve the situation, but rather the power of violence, since they refuse to listen to reason, much less Christian love. I deeply sensed the difference in

thinking between a large segment of our nation, represented by these interlocutors, and Christian sentiment.

I ask the Lord to illuminate the paths of his Church, so that they can also be understood by those who seek the good of their country, but by paths very different from those indicated by Christ.

Tuesday, March 27, 1979.

To my surprise, before breakfast, I received a visit from Dr. Nelson Segovia, appointed judge in charge of the execution of the hostages held during the Delicia factory strike. He told me about his very serious problem, and I tried to help him, to the best of my knowledge, also enlisting the help of Monsignor Urioste, whom he met with later. I spoke with him later and believe things are moving in the right direction.

The entire morning was devoted to a meeting with the Presbyteral Senate at the Somascan Sisters' house, where we were also treated to lunch. It was extremely interesting to attempt to conduct an evaluation of the Archdiocese. It seemed so interesting that we suggested it should be done from time to time, and if… outside possible,not just in one morning, but dedicating sufficient and in-depth time to taking the pulse of the Diocese's journey and increasingly better orienting our pastoral care.

There was talk of changing the senators, since, according to the original statutes, their terms were two years, which are now expiring. However, Father José Luis Bourguet was left with the task of reviewing the statutes and deciding on the matter at a future meeting.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, a roundtable discussion was held at the National University, in the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy. The topic was "The Role of the Church in Latin America." Father Jesús Delgado spoke from a theological perspective, presenting liberation theology; and Father Octavio Cruz, parish priest of Aguilares, a graduate in Social Sciences, presented the socioeconomic and political landscape of the country and Latin America.

And finally, I spoke specifically about the role of the Church in Latin America, taking into account the recent Puebla documents. The welcome our University gave to this representative of the Church was deeply moving.

His audience at The Law School, the university's largest faculty and the venue for the roundtable discussion, couldn't contain the crowd, which spilled into the corridors and onto the terraces overlooking the lecture hall. There was great respect and silence during the presentations, and then, during question time, the questions themselves demonstrated the profound interest the Church's message holds for this university community of professors and recent graduates, some of whom are already professionals.

I expressed my gratitude and offered the Church's cooperation in this national cultural endeavor. The Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, along with the Rector, hosted a small reception at the end of the event, during which we shared our thoughts on the event. It was certainly a positive experience, from everyone. The comments we heard afterwards were also very positive.

In the evening I attended a dinner with the Christian Trainees, who often give me the opportunity to share a moment of family fellowship with them.

Wednesday, March 28, 1979.

Among this morning's audience, the most important was the one with several progressive military officers, now retired, with whom we spoke at length. I was accompanied by Archbishop Urioste, to better represent the Church's presence. They presented a considerable amount of history on the government of El Salvador and proposed some solutions to overcome this situation.

On behalf of the Church, we admired their goodwill. We expressed our gratitude for the enrichment they provided us with their reports and offered to collaborate. The Church is always willing to collaborate when it sees a government-led approach.sincere in serving the people, whom the Church also serves. The conversation became very interesting, and I think we all left with a little more hope in our hearts. We promised to meet again to discuss this topic.

They conveyed a message to their interlocutors, including the President of the Republic, regarding the Church's views on this situation.

I canceled a private lunch with the Redemptorist Fathers and a meeting with the printers, as well as my participation in the Mary Help of Christians catechumenal group. I regret that these sometimes involuntary retractions do not make me happy, but sometimes health does not match good will.

Thursday, March 29, 1979.

This morning we had a meeting with the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. It's still early days, but the meeting was very positive. Specifically, the question I asked before any other agenda item was to ask them to express their understanding of the importance of this pastoral commission and to offer suggestions for its truly effective functioning.

This response occupied almost the entire meeting, but it led to the very useful creation of a small Council, composed of a single representative from each of the priests, a representative from the nuns, and a representative from the laity. This Council was designed to study all the suggestions received and to make this body more effective. The Council recommends this body and will undoubtedly benefit the pastoral care of the Diocese.

In the afternoon, Sister Nelly Rodríguez, from the Sacred Heart School, along with other mothers, visited me to express her concerns about the dangerous currents circulating among young people, including their children, particularly certain Eastern and Gnostic ideologies, sometimes linked to other types of alienation. We spoke at length about young people and proposed measures that Catholic schools could adopt. Above all, as one of them said, it was a therapeutic meeting, because we also touched on spiritual issues of great personal interest.

That evening, he was invited to dinner with the Brothers to congratulate Mother Vanegas, elected vice president of the Clar, and also as an expression of solidarity with the Archbishopric. For my part, I thanked them and expressed my satisfaction with the

lives the Brothers lead, encouraging them to increasingly promote the spirit of religious life in the current direction of the Church.

Friday, March 30, 1979.

Dr. Roberto Silva came to breakfast with me, and I begged him to tell me anything with complete confidence, whenever he wanted. And his words today were meant to clarify, before my listeners, what he himself said: "There are many, and not just his own people, but also those who attack him and listen to him a lot." He made it clear that terrorism should not be confused with the legitimate demands of the left, and that this was necessary because the constant accusation is that terrorism is defending itself from communism. And it was necessary to emphasize that there are many legitimate demands within what they call the left.

Just as there's much to condemn on the left when it turns into terrorism and fanatical violence, I rounded out my point by saying that, similarly, I'd like to distinguish between good and evil on the right, which also exists. I thanked him for his collaboration and asked him to always share any suggestions he might have.we had talked.

I went to lunch with the Fathers of Opus Dei in their new residence and left them the autographed portrait, "to the Opus Dei of the Archdiocese, with my blessing as pastor and friend."

That evening I had another interview with a Finnish journalist, who, in addition to his report on El Salvador, said he was gathering information for a book he was preparing.

Saturday, March 31, 1979.

We held our second breakfast of reflection on information. Monsignor Urioste, Father Rafael Moreno, Fabián Amaya, Walter Guerra, and Doris Osegueda were present. We analyzed a letter from several communities complaining that the comments on Radio Ysax and the presentation of Orientación did not follow the Archbishop's pastoral line, but rather presented biased political options and did not give space to the life of the basic ecclesial communities.

The analysis we conducted was quite good, and we concluded by organizing a meeting with these communities to clarify some issues they were unaware of and to also take their ideals into account.

In the afternoon, I went to San Antonio Abad with the community coordination team. We discussed some aspects of the problems affecting the parish where El Despertar is located, the site of the murder of Father Octavio and the four young men. We agreed to celebrate a Mass on the evening of Holy Monday to install Father Rogelio there. He will temporarily assume responsibility for the parish while FatherStump,whom this community eagerly awaits, is ordained a priest.

That evening I also received a visit from a Finnish journalist, who promised, in addition to the report he would produce, to accompany me to Mass in the cathedral the next day and to the Salesian oratory, where he would share my experience with those children and the catechists.

Sunday, April 1, 1979.

The Mass in the Cathedral had a very special, encouraging, and exemplary note. It was the presence of the community of Somascan Fathers, who chose to concelebrate with me and, at the same time, direct their institutions, their seminary, and other Somascan works. There were six priests present, whom I greeted at the beginning of the Mass, presenting them to the community as a gesture of communion worthy of imitation.

And during the Gospel, one of the priests, before my homily, expressed the intention with which they had come, their founding charisms, precisely for orphans and the defenseless. And how this commitment to the poor is, indeed, the authentic commitment of the Gospel of the saints of all time and that it should be their commitment, as well as their solidarity with the pastor of the diocese.

After Mass, I celebrated another Eucharist at the Ricaldone Institute's oratory, where I had been invited and where I shared the Salesian joys of the catechists and children who benefit from it, numbering over a thousand, in those vast camps. There, I administered Confirmation to several young people and explained to them what it means to be baptized and receive the power of the Holy Spirit that is Confirmation.

In the afternoon, we celebrated the Holy Hour, a very crowded and fervent service in the Chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence, where we also administered the baptism of the firstborn son of Roberto Cuéllar, a great collaborator of the Archdiocese since his service at the Legal Aid Office.

And in the evening we celebrated the 50 years of religious life of Mother Juanita, a small lady Oblate of Divine Love, who worked for many years at the Colegio de la Sagrada Familia. We shared with that community impressions very much in tune with the pastoral work of the Archdiocese.

Monday, April 2, 1979.

I had planned to take this day off, but the Archbishop's office has been very busy. However, in agreement with Archbishop Urioste, Vicar General, I will be absent from these duties as much as possible this afternoon and the following two days.

Tuesday, April 3, 1979.

Although there is a clergy meeting today, dedicated to the Lenten spiritual retreat, Monsignor Urioste was kind enough to represent and advise me to take a day of rest, which was very much appreciated.

Wednesday, April 4, 1979.

I am celebrating 37 years of priestly life. I was ordained at Easter 1942. That day was Holy Saturday, April 4th. At Mass in the hospital, the nuns already knew about it and offered me Communion and congratulated me. In keeping with my plan to take these three days of rest, I did not go to the Curia; I simply signed some letters that were prepared for me. I am grateful for this collaboration.

Thursday, April 5, 1979.

The first meeting of the Executive Council or Secretariat of the Pastoral Council was held today. It was formed with a representative of the vicariates, Father Carlos Mejía, Vicar of La Asunción, Flor Blanca; a representative of the religious community, an Oblate Sister of the Sacred Heart who works in Aguilares; and a representative of the laity. A layperson from the parish of Miramonte also participated. This core group, together with the Secretary of the Pastoral Council, is responsible for implementing all matters agreed upon by the Pastoral Council. It will also bring suggestions, criticisms, and other issues requiring pastoral study to the Council.

This meeting coincided with an interview requested by representatives of Marriage Encounters. This movement, similar to Christianity Course and the Christian Family Movement, originated from a group of Christianity Course and has grown significantly thanks to the numerous meetings they have held. They shared their problems, especially those related to other family movements, and we tried to listen to them and propose solutions, especially by offering them the services of this Pastoral Council Secretariat.

Also this morning, I received a visit from an American journalist bearing a new package of signatures from France in solidarity with our Archdiocese. There were other visits during this busy morning.

I went to lunch with journalist Jorge Pinto, where Father Benito Tovar took me. We shared our current concerns with a university professor who attended the lunch.

This afternoon I attended a meeting of Central American Baptist pastors at the María Eugenia retreat house. About forty pastors wanted to meet me and discuss Christian and evangelical issues in our Central American region. I responded by greeting them. Admiring theTheir sense of Christian breadth and my commitment to friendship and ecumenical work. The dialogue that developed with them was very interesting; we touched on various topics related to the Central American situation, as well as the commitment that we Christians who believe in the Gospel must assume in these situations and realities.

I was unable to attend the meeting I had organized, but Monsignor Urioste and Father Ernesto Abrego were present, and they dined and discussed the country's situation with these young entrepreneurs. My absence appears to have delayed an initiative they intend to discuss at a future meeting with me.

Friday, April 6, 1979.

At 8:30 a.m., a daylong spiritual retreat began at the Colegio of La Sagrada Familia with teachers from various Catholic schools. With Father Isidro, secretary of the Confres Foundation, we presented the theme of Holy Week and the current situation in the country. We also engaged in a very interesting conversation with the teachers, which revealed the interest these teachers, who work with Catholic schools, have in the Church and in Jesus Christ.

An English journalist, who needed a translator, came to see me and we talked about the situation of the two Englishmen being held hostage.

They expressed concern and dissatisfaction with the attitude of the British government, which has been unwilling to do anything to free its subordinates. We discussed at length the situation in the country and the Church. It is one of the most popular newspapers in England, with a circulation of over a million copies.

That's why I was so interested in interviewing this journalist. I offered the services the Church has provided and will continue to provide for the kidnapped English people.

I had lunch with the Jesuit Fathers of the Uca and we discussed, above all, my plan to write a pastoral letter for August 6th. I want to dedicate it to the current problems of our Archdiocese, such as the relationship with the government and the national security regime. And, above all, to the presentation of a Church that seeks to be authentic and unwilling to compromise with any political organization, which it seeks to understand and support within reasonable limits, but without identifying with it.

And I ask all Christians to build, in our basic ecclesial communities, the true Church without ambiguous contours, but rather to truly define the Church that Christ wants to build. The Jesuit Fathers have understood my concern; we have discussed the topic at length, and they will help me draft an outline for this pastoral letter, which, God willing, will be published on August 6th.

That evening, Dr. González from the El Salvador Human Rights Commission visited me, and we discussed the country's difficult situation and the collaboration provided by the Human Rights Commission and the Church, and how we can attract more active members to build peace in the country.

A workers' commission was soon informed that a fight broke out at the Adoc factory, where about 1,000 striking workers were barricaded, but at that time they had been attacked by a military operation. I tried to contact the parish priest of Soyapango, Father Villarán, who went to inquire about the incident and told me that there was indeed a siege, but that he had been unable to get any closer because the military cordon that had been placed around the factory prevented him from doing so.

I also spoke with Father Moreno, in Santa Tecla, warning him that he should be careful because he would call on him, if necessary, to collaborate in pacifying this new situation.

Today I went to the doctor and, thank God, he found me in good health.

Saturday, April 7, 1979.

With the Commission for Social Communications, we had a reflective breakfast at the Somascan Sisters' house and discussed aspects of Church-Government relations, as well as new situations that seem to be emerging as a sign of hope in various sectors. We will seek to encourage good intentions that, hopefully, will become reality. We also explored the need to reconcile political ideologies and practices with the faith and practices of our religion during Holy Week.

It was also suggested that we clarify this point and ask for the utmost respect for the religious sentiments of the faithful. We then studied the week's summary, which will be used for tomorrow's homily. There was no time to elaborate on the Archdiocese's

vision or policy regarding its use of social media. We will do so at a meeting in two weeks.

This morning I received in the audience the Ambassador to the Holy See, Dr. Lencho Llach, who will be leaving for Rome to spend Holy Week, participating in the papal ceremonies. I informed him that I would also be in Rome for the beatification of Father Coll, founder of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation, and asked him to intervene to arrange my private audience in advance.

In the afternoon, we visited the El Pepeto neighborhood of the Soyapango parish, where the Sisters of the Holy Family School held a wonderful catechism class. I shared the joy of that area. I arrived at a small house where they offered me pupusas and hot chocolate.

The conflict at the Adoc factory appears to have had a tragic outcome, which I will discuss later.

Sunday, April 8, 1979.

Palm Sunday. In agreement with the parish priest of Calvary, Father Francisco Sanggiano, we celebrated the blessing of the palms on the façade of Calvary. There was an impressive crowd of people holding palms. After the blessing, we proceeded in procession to the Cathedral. Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral atrium, as the crowd was so large that it would not fit inside. I gave the homily, presenting Christ as the mediator of the new covenant to come.

A covenant whose mediator identifies with the people to the point of presenting himself as the Servant of God, humiliated unto death. But the new covenant that God makes with humanity is to make them share in the glorification that Christ achieves through that humiliation. Unfortunately, this is now the second Sunday in a row with interference in the radio broadcast. Most likely, it is caused by interference from the Antel headquarters itself. The aim is to interfere with the broadcast of my homilies.

The choral part was led by the Seminary of the Salesian Fathers, and the ritual part by the San José de la Montaña Seminary. The entire ceremony was splendid. Thank God!

At noon inPlace Peran expansion of the family, together with my brothers we had lunch at one of them's houses.

In the afternoon, I went to bless the new bell tower of the Church of the Concepción de Santa Tecla. The parish priest, Father Andrés Alvarenga, the mayor, and numerous prominent figures and figures filled the spacious atrium of the Church of Santa Tecla. I spoke with other lay people, who addressed the crowd on behalf of the parish. I celebrated Holy Mass there and then cordially greeted the faithful.

I later visited a renewal group in the Spirit that meets in the parish school. I was encouraged to connect with the Church and not remain merely emotional, but to deepen my authentic renewal in the Spirit. I felt a sense of solidarity with the Bishop; a determination to be faithful to the hierarchical Church and never disobey its pastors.

Holy Monday, April 9, 1979.

My main concern this morning was to speak with the heads of the Archdiocesan radio and media outlets to understand what is being done and the implications of the interruption of yesterday's broadcast of the ceremony in the Cathedral. Father Pedraz has already begun an investigation. He believes, in all likelihood, that there was deliberate interference with Catholic radio. I thanked him and implored him to continue clarifying the matter and to do everything possible to normalize the situation.

Throughout the day, further interference occurred, particularly in programs broadcasting critical opinions on the country's situation. A technical attaché from the American Embassy, speaking privately with Father Pedraz, expressed his disappointment at this measure against our radio station. He is a good Catholic and firmly supports the position of our archdiocese. He promised his full cooperation.

Today I prepared with engineer Oliva the recording for next Wednesday, which is the radio interview.

In the evening I went to San Antonio Abad, where a beautiful Mass was celebrated in El Despertar for the installation of Father Rogelio, who will live there and be interim director of the parish of San Antonio Abad.

It was a community gathering with a strong family spirit.

Holy Tuesday, April 10, 1979.

I have sent for reprint the letter that Pope John Paul II wishes to send to all priests on the occasion of this Holy Thursday. Since our printing plant has acquired a modern

offset printing system, it has become very easy to reproduce 500 copies of the letter I sent to other bishops for their priests. It will be distributed to all the priests of the Archdiocese.

Efforts to ensure Radio Ysax's proper transmission continued today. It was confirmed that the problem was due to interference.

Today, the investigation into the interference at Radio Ysax continued, confirming that it was deliberately used to prevent, primarily, the broadcast of programs addressing the situation in the country. Yskl, which broadcasts Radio Ysax, publicly stated that it was not responsible; that its principles prevent it from committing such a despicable act.

This reveals the malicious manipulations involved, and in particular, the radio commentary that day referred to the possibility of blaming the government, or at least making it complicit, if such interference were not prevented. In this regard, a polite but firm note was also sent to Antel, requesting an improvement in service to prevent such interference.

At noon, Father Pedraz, a young American woman, and Dr. Ítalo Vallecillos, from the Uca, visited me to confirm the telephone announcement Father Chencho Alas had given me regarding the visit of a United States senator, who will be coming next Holy Thursday. We have made plans to promote this meeting, which will be held at the Belén School in Santa Tecla, where he will prepare lunch for next Holy Thursday.

In the afternoon, I went to visit Father Crespín, who was hospitalized, but I couldn't find him at his parish in Santiago, Ciudad Delgado. I could only send him my greetings, as he was in a neighborhood near his parish, despite his precarious health.

I also visited the other parish in Ciudad Delgado, San Sebastián, where Father Gutiérrez is, but I couldn't find him there either. The faithful were arranging the Nazarene during the traditional Prayer in the Garden.

I finally visited the community of Our Lady, where the Bethlemite mothers are, to inform them of my upcoming trip to Costa Rica and I offer forI serve you,if they want to send something to their province, who resides right in Costa Rica.

CHAPTER 12.

Year 1979.

Diary from April 11th to 27th.

1979.

Holy Wednesday, April 11, 1979.

With Father Brito, we planned to distribute the Pope's Letter to all priests, so that everyone in the Archdiocese could receive Mass on Holy Thursday. I also asked him to help me find a priest so that, in my next meeting with the U.S. representative, I could explore these two points in greater depth: the influence of multinationals on social injustice in our country and the situation of our undocumented citizens in the United States. I would ask this parliamentarian for his cooperation on both issues.

At the Information Secretariat, we discussed the problem of radio interference at length, but at noon, during the "Comments" program, there was another strong interference, preventing us from listening to that program or the Information Secretariat's program, where I had my usual Wednesday interview. However, thank God, we were able to listen to it later that evening.

In the afternoon, I visited the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters at the Fatima College of Santa Tecla, which is preparing for the beatification of their founder, Father Coll. I will have the pleasure of attending the beatification ceremony in Rome, at the invitation of the congregation itself. We spoke at length about the work this congregation does in our country, particularly at the Fatima College and the College of Suchitoto, and in other fields of human development here and in Central America.

I appreciated his willingness to adapt to the sentiments of our Archdiocese. He gave me the impression of a congregation truly faithful to its own charisms and capable of putting them at the service of the local Church.

Holy Thursday, April 12, 1979.

At 9:30, the Chrism Mass began in the Cathedral. Several priests were present, perhaps 60, which is significant given that we are all very busy on Holy Thursday. The theme of the homily was "The Holy Spirit, Soul of the New Covenant." After Mass, we descended to the crypt with all the priests and had a small reception, thus nourishing the fraternal spirit of this day of our priesthood.

In the vicariates, particularly in Chalatenango, a meeting was held with the priests who were unable to go to the Cathedral, and there they were given the newly consecrated Holy Oils.

At half past eleven a meeting was held with a North American deputy, Mr. Tom Harkin, together with others who accompanied him and, for us, also the rector.of the Uca,Mr. Pepe Simán, some members of the Human Rights Commission, Beto Cuéllar, of Legal Aid, Ms. Doris Osegueda, head of the social media.

The goal was to learn about the situation in the Church and the country. We began by analyzing what he himself had experienced, namely, the interference of our Catholic radio station in the Archbishop's programs. Father Ellacuría gave him an overview of the situation in the country, and Beto Cuéllar presented specific cases of human rights violations. We had lunch there, at the Belén School, and when they left, I got the impression they were satisfied with the interview.

The Congressman, who is Catholic, told me that, despite the enormous distance separating us, he would consider himself a parishioner of this Archbishop. Congressman Harkin is the one who promoted the U.S. Congress's support for my Nobel Prize nomination. I thanked him for his interest in this visit, and we expressed our hope that this dialogue will continue. He is a generous supporter of our Church's morality.

In the afternoon, this North American representative attended religious services in the Cathedral, which was beautiful and very fervent, packed with faithful. We celebrated the Eucharist, and the theme of the homily was "Love, Law of the New Covenant." I took the opportunity to reiterate the Puebla message to the peoples of Latin America, inviting them to build a civilization of love.

At night, a group of seminarians and hosts from the Radio Ysax studio led the silent procession that took place in San Salvador and in several cities and cantons.

Good Friday, April 13, 1979.

Thank God, the three scheduled events were broadcast: the Stations of the Cross, the afternoon liturgy, and the Holy Burial. With the collaboration of Aníbal Romero and several seminarians, I believe a positive message was conveyed on this important day in the life of our Church. And many were able to hear it on the radio.

An unpleasant note was the presence of the National Guard Band in the Holy Burial procession. Even more serious was the opposition of some members of the Holy Burial Confraternity to the broadcast via the loudspeakers on the floats, giving preference to the Band and thus rejecting the Archbishop's message broadcast to the entire Archdiocese via radio.

The parish priest Don Sanggiano took note of this, and I also believe he is urging you to do it. It is best that this band member not participate, as it belongs to a security force that has gravely offended the Church and Christians. It's also best that the faith and solidarity with the Archbishop of all those who belong to parish associations be examined.

Because I believe that in other parishes too, there have been instances of rebellion against the authority of the Church, when Holy Week processions or events are organized outside the authority of the parish priests.

We will conduct an evaluation of Holy Week with the Pastoral Commission to improve these aspects of our celebrations, which should be the sole responsibility of the Church.

Holy Saturday, April 14, 1979.

In the evening, we celebrated the solemn Easter Vigil. The people's response was marvelous, even though the Cathedral couldn't hold the crowd; the door was opened to let the choir enter, but many remained outside. The participation of the young people was very significant, as were the readings, all offered by members of different Christian communities, even those separated from each other. The Liturgy of the Word thus became a truly ecumenical celebration.

The heartfelt joy was especially evident at the moment of departure, when I greeted people from the door, until a downpour blocked our way to the exit and I had to go back through the crowd, still waiting to leave, receiving warm greetings and wishing everyone a Happy Easter.

Easter Sunday, April 15, 1979.

The main event of the day was the solemn Mass in the Cathedral, at the usual time of eight o'clock, but with a distinct rite and a large attendance. The homily was entitled "The Resurrection, Seal and Key of the New Covenant." At the end of the Mass, I

imparted the papal blessing and explained the meaning of indulgence and the essential requirement of repentance and fidelity to Our Lord.

My first concern was the situation at Radio Ysax, as the deliberate interference with the Archbishop's messages continued. We agreed with Father Pedraz and Monsignor Urioste to officially contact Antel and make them aware of their responsibilities in this case. Religious congregations and lay people will also be encouraged to assert this Church's right to freedom of expression before the government.sorting it out for investigation and preventing interference against our radio.

In the afternoon, I left for Costa Rica for the meeting of Sedac, the Episcopal Secretariat for Central America and Panama, where I will be present throughout the week. On the plane, I was accompanied by a Protestant pastor who had visited me that morning in the hospital, expressing his solidarity with our Church's position and also expressing his concern for ecumenism in Latin America in the light of Celam’'s new guidelines.

For my part I told him that at the same time TheThe Pope had promoted ecumenism in his new encyclical and affirmed that each bishop in his diocese was responsible for the Church's movements. Therefore, Celam and any opposing or marginal orientation were not definitive. I believe I gave him sufficient guidance and encouragement to continue working along this path advocated by the Church.

Upon arriving in Costa Rica, I met several bishops arriving from Central America. In particular, Bishop Manresa and Bishop Luna stayed at the Bethlehem Sisters' house. The Carmelite Sisters, who had already heard of my arrival in San José, were also very kind in welcoming them at the airport.

During dinner at the Bethlemites' home, I received two phone calls: one from Father Plácido, who is in San José for an ecclesiology course, and another from Father Higinio Alas, who is in Heredia. Both proposed interviews with people interested in the situation in El Salvador. For my part, I told them I wanted to first assess the atmosphere of the bishops' meeting and its schedule to discuss the possibilities and appropriateness of these interviews.

Father Plácido, along with another companion, Agustino, arrived shortly after to visit me personally and took me for a nice evening walk through the city of San José.

Monday, April 16, 1979.

My first concern was the situation at Radio Ysax, as deliberate interference with the Archbishop's messages continued. We agreed with Father Pedraz and Monsignor Urioste to officially address Antel and make them aware of their responsibilities in this case. Religious congregations and lay people will also be encouraged to assert this Church's right to freedom of expression before the government, urging it to investigate and prevent interference with our radio station.

In the afternoon, I left for Costa Rica for the meeting of Sedac, the Episcopal Secretariat for Central America and Panama, where I will spend the entire week. On the plane, I was accompanied by a Protestant pastor who had visited me that morning in the hospital, expressing his solidarity with our Church's position and also expressing his concern for ecumenism in Latin America in the light of Celam's new guidelines.

For my part I told him that at the same time TheThe Pope had promoted ecumenism in his new encyclical and affirmed that each bishop in his diocese was responsible for the Church's movements. Therefore, Celam and any opposing or marginal orientation were not definitive. I believe I provided him with sufficient guidance and encouragement to continue working along this path advocated by the Church.

Upon arriving in Costa Rica, I met several bishops from Central America who were arriving. We were guests, in particular, of Bishop Manresa and Bishop Luna, at the house of the Bethlemite Sisters.

The Carmelite nuns, who had already learned of my arrival in San José, were also very kind in meeting me at the airport. During dinner at the Bethlehem sisters' house, I received two phone calls: one from Father Plácido, who is in San José for an ecclesiology course, and another from Father Higinio Alas, who is in Heredia. Both offered me an interview with people interested in the situation in El Salvador.

For my part, I told them I wanted to first experience the atmosphere of the bishops' meeting and its schedule to assess the possibilities and discretion of these gatherings. Father Plácido, along with another companion, Agustino, arrived shortly afterward to visit me personally and took me on a pleasant evening stroll through the city of San José.

Tuesday, April 17, 1979.

At nine in the morning, I went to the meeting place in Sedac, the Claretian Fathers' retreat house, but the meeting would begin in the afternoon, so I took advantage of my

free morning and afternoon to visit the Carmelite nuns in Alajuela. Upon my return, I found several bishops already there, although some were still missing.

The inaugural Mass was celebrated at five o'clock in the afternoon, presided over by the Bishop of Alajuela, Monsignor Bolaños, who is also Apostolic Administrator of San José. He welcomed everyone and expressed his hopes for the meeting.

After dinner, we had an initial meeting to define the agenda and working methods. The main idea was to briefly present the guidelines of the Puebla document and the other doctrinal points outlined during the conferences, presenting them as brief food for thought. We will then meet throughout the country to focus on these Puebla guidelines and, with them, analyze our national realities. From there, we will meet to identify the constants and clusters... I will organize the constants appearing in the various national reports in this order.

Subsequently, in a plenary session, we will delve deeper into the conclusions and the role and plans of Sedac for the present and future in our work of evangelization.

Wednesday, April 18, 1979.

The Eucharist was presided over by Archbishop Miguel Obando Bravo of Managua, president of Sedac. He gave a homily to offer God's work, welcome all the bishops, now numbering approximately 30, thank the Costa Rican episcopate for their warm welcome, and invite us to engage in pastoral work that will be truly beneficial for our Central American region and Panama.

The morning's work was quite demanding because we listened to the prepared documents, which were rather monotonous, despite some positive approaches, particularly that of Archbishop McGrath, regarding the Puebla document. They were not completed in the morning, and part of the afternoon was devoted to listening to the six prepared documents.

Subsequently, we organized ourselves into commissions within the episcopal conferences to study, in light of the Puebla document, the opportunities and difficulties our countries face in realizing the ideals proposed by Puebla, such as evangelization in the present and future.

In one of the plenary sessions, at noon, the telegram we will write to the Holy Father was read. This telegram, entrusted to me together with Bishop García Aráuz of Guatemala, was written on behalf of the entire Central American episcopate and was approved at first reading.

The work of the episcopal conferences has been very interesting. Our group in El Salvador was studying various aspects presented in the documents. For my part, I proposed presenting our ecclesial and national reality with absolute frankness, starting with the divisions among the bishops and the various problems in relations with the government, with those who have suffered true martyrdom for the Church, and other controversial aspects of our episcopal relations.

The topic proved very fruitful, because, as Monsignor Luis Chávez y González, who was also with us, said, "the bombing was harsh," he told me, referring to the fact that in many speeches I had been accused as if I were responsible for the divisions and unrest, even the politicization of the clergy.

At night I received a visit from two university students who offered to bring me a copy of the report of the Oas Commission on Human Rights, which was reproduced for distribution in Costa Rica. I also gave an interview to the television channel Channel 6, which was scheduled to air this evening.

The evening plenary session was devoted to the report of our meetings of the episcopal conferences, and the six conferences provided very realistic, courageous, and frank accounts. In the end, we identified the consistent themes. Twelve very important themes emerged, which tomorrow we will meet in groups to explore further.

Thursday, April 19, 1979.

The Eucharist was presided over by Bishop Arrieta of Tilarán, president of the Costa Rican Episcopal Conference. In his homily, he spoke of episcopal unity, the sense of service in our ministry, and fraternal understanding for all our priests.

After breakfast, I prepared the report I'd been given for former seminarian Mauricio Oliva. Unfortunately, it couldn't help but be negative.

This morning's plenary assembly was dedicated to explaining Celam and its latest meeting held in Teques, Caracas, Venezuela, explained Monsignor Arrieta, vice president for Central America, and Monsignor Manresa, previous vice president.

The meeting continues its work in small groups and plenary sessions. A conclusion is emerging, which will be expressed in a press release with clear objectives, in line with

the information we receive from Puebla, from the Puebla document, which will undoubtedly be the Magna Carta of our pastoral ministry for a long time to come.

Today I went to lunch with a group of ecumenical Christians. They come from various parts of Latin America and are dedicated to pastoral work, primarily among peasants and indigenous people. They were very interested in learning about El Salvador's experience. With me, as Salvadorans, were Father Plácido, Father Higinio Alas, and two seminarians studying in San José.

(There's a glitch in the recording, so please forgive me, and I hope for some silence so the story can continue during this afternoon's events.)

The afternoon meetings were held in a plenary session to gather the morning's conclusions. The group meetings, held by the episcopal conferences, included a meeting to draw conclusions for our countries and present suggestions to the Sedac meeting, which will be held during the evening plenary session. I was unable to actively participate in the afternoon meetings due to the presence of numerous visitors.

The first was from Colonel Claramount, the exiled candidate for the Partido Uno party. He expressed optimism and hope to soon return to the country and continue working for the nation. I tried to foster these hopes. The second visit took place at night; university journalists, for an interview for their university newspaper. We discussed the relationship between Church and State and the situation of the Church, especially in the country.

He also asked me what my criteria are for being nominated for the Nobel Prize. Along these lines, the third visit of the afternoon by a group called the "Pro-Nobel Prize

Committee for Human Rights in El Salvador" was underway. Father Higinio Alas was present, offering advice; Father Plácido was also present; Dr. Castillo, brother of Mr. Baires, and other Salvadoran and Costa Rican people were also present. I thanked them for this noble gesture, accepting it not in a personal capacity, but as part of the pastoral work I am committed to carrying out for the Archdiocese, which addresses the concerns of pastors and communities in various parts of the continent.

The last visit, already at eight thirty, was from the Salvadoran consul, Dr. Granillo, whom I had known since I was a child in San Miguel. I'm sorry, but the last visit was from a group of Christian Democrats in exile, including engineer Napoleón Duarte and Dr. Antonio Morales Erlich. They wanted to gather information about the Church in its final moments in El Salvador. They also wanted to express their desire to collaborate and serve, and also to ask for my pastoral assistance.

We spoke at length, and I expressed my sense of service and my hope in politicians who truly love the Church. And, above all, if they are Christianly inspired. It was already midnight, and I had to get up early to go to the seminary, where I had promised to celebrate Mass at 6:30 a.m. It was a day filled with satisfactions, but also with moments of disappointment, considering the division within our Salvadoran episcopate.

Friday, April 20, 1979.

At the invitation of the Major Seminary, I went to celebrate the Eucharist at 6:30 a.m. In his homily, he praised the characteristics of youth and how, in a seminary, God wants to take advantage of youth to rejuvenate the priestly vocation, so that even we, who are already priests and are far advanced in life, find in the seminary's youth an image of

that resurrection of Christ, always young, always joyful, never boring, that is, the life of the Church, which we as priests must serve.

In this sense, I also praised, with the words of the Pope in his letter to priests, the reason for celibacy, as a service of witness of a life distinct from the worldly one, to the people of God.

Father Montesinos, who had concelebrated with me, returned, passing by the retreat house again to pick up some documents, since I could not stay until the end of the bishops' meeting, which, as they told me later, was very edifying and it was deemed appropriate to continue supporting this organization of the Central American Episcopate, Sedac.

The Carmelite nuns of Alajuela were waiting to accompany me to the airport, but first, since there was still time, we went to visit the beautiful beach resort of Ojos de Agua, near Alajuela. At the airport, I met Monsignor Ham, auxiliary bishop of Guatemala, and Monsignor Gerardo Flores of Alta Verapaz, also from Guatemala, for the trip. I had a very pleasant stay with them, a very interesting conversation, and a very pastoral journey from SanJosephto San Salvador.

In San Salvador, the Barraza family and my sister were waiting for me and accompanied me to my residence at the Divine Providence Hospital. Fraternizing with this community that had welcomed me with such love, I shared my impressions with them, and they also told me the week's news. Finally, in the evening, we watched some beautiful slides provided by the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation, which showed the various activities this congregation carries out in El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua.

This magazine is highly timely, as the founder of this congregation, Father Francisco Coll, a Catalan, is about to be beatified. His beatification will take place in the first ceremony of its kind, which will be held in Rome on Sunday, April 29, under the guidance of Pope John Paul II. Thanks to the invitation and the generosity of the nuns, I will be fortunate enough to attend, God willing.

Saturday, April 21, 1979.

Like every Saturday, we had our working breakfast with the media.

We are examining several requests from workers' and farmers' organizations to have paid broadcasts on Catholic radio. Similarly, El Salvador's Human Rights Commission requested space on our station. The request was granted, but it also called for censorship of all publications. Special programming has been planned for May Day to present the Church's teachings on workers and work.

Numerous texts by Pope John Paul II, addressed primarily to workers, will be cited. During this meeting, I also discussed the course of action to be taken in Rome regarding my upcoming trip and the meeting that, God willing, I will have with the Holy Father.

Very serious revelations have been made regarding collusion in several violent and murderous acts, collusion with the government. This case concerned the attempted assassination of Dr. Méndez, a member of the Commission on Human Rights, currently

wounded in the leg, struck by a bullet while shooting. Tomorrow evening, God willing, I will visit this collaborator, who faced imminent assassination.

Other media activities were also discussed. Around 11:30, I had an interview with Mr. Lewis Wilton, a member of the Associated Press, on whose behalf he interviewed me, regarding the situation of the Church in this country and some doctrinal points of our pastoral ministry.

At the invitation of Father Modesto Villarán, I traveled to Candelaria, Cuscatlán, to celebrate Mass in honor of Father Villarán's father and mother, who were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. The celebration was made even more special by the fact that a brother of Father Villarán and his wife knelt beside the celebrants, as they too were celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary that day.

Sunday, April 22, 1979.

In my homily in the Cathedral, I announced the program for the Easter sermon. We will explore the various Easter blessings, that is, all the riches of redemption presented to us by the biblical readings. For this Sunday, I highlighted "The Gift of the Holy Spirit," bestowed by Christ on the very day of the Resurrection. Secondly, "The Gift of Faith," in the episode of Thomas and in the second reading, where John tells us that this is the victory that defeats the world: our faith.

And the third gift: "The supernatural love that creates the true Christian community." Unfortunately, there was interference from Catholic radio today too, which

prevented a clear broadcast of our homily, but the station found a way to broadcast it after Mass at the antenna.

Then I went to San Pedro Perulapán, where I failed several times due to unforeseen difficulties. Today I went to renew my baptismal vows with that parish community.confirmation I haveI explained to them the meaning of Easter and the Christian community that lives by that mystery. I was very sad not to stay for lunch with the Father, despite his insistence, but following some very wise advice, I didn't want to go to a public soup kitchen where lunch was already prepared.

I also noticed, at the National Guard barracks, some surveillance activities that I considered inappropriate to continue promoting with my presence in the city.

In the evening, I celebrated Holy Mass in the Parish of the Resurrection, Colonia Miramonte, where the Augustinian Fathers, following the tradition of previous parish priests, celebrated as the patronal feast, offered a fraternal banquet to the entire community after Mass. The theme of the homily was: "The parish community continues, under the breath of the risen Christ, the mission of the Church that Christ entrusted to it."

A mission that involves the cross and martyrdom, as evidenced by the tomb of Father Navarro, a parish priest murdered in his own parish, but which is a pain that is then assumed in the transformation of the victory of the risen Christ, just as he assumed his cross and his humiliations in the glorious merit of his resurrection.

After Mass, I went with Father Moreno and Mr. Cuéllar to visit Dr. Méndez, the victim of an attack this week. Thankfully, the doctor only suffered a gunshot wound to

the leg and is recovering, with a good chance of a speedy recovery. I know this attack was inspired by government maneuvers, of which the doctor himself is unaware.

Monday, April 23, 1979.

A brief conversation with Father Rafael Palacios, parish priest in SanFrancisco in Mejicanos, and with the Belgian nun María. We were able to confirm that there is significant political infiltration in the pastoral work of that parish and that the priest is willing to eliminate any interference to create a truly pastoral parish.

I went to Chalatenango to speak with the minor seminarians and have lunch with them. It was a very cordial and interesting conversation, which was later joined by the Sisters of the Assumption, who form a community in that parish.

Upon our return, we met with Monsignor Urioste, Father Pedraz, director of the radio station, and Father Moreno, from the Secretariat for Social Communications. The main topic was the interference with Radio Ysax. It was agreed that Father Pedraz, as director of the radio station, along with Monsignor Urioste, would travel to Antel with a note requesting an effective solution to the problem.

Tomorrow, after this, we will have a meeting to see what to do, taking into account the conversation we had with the president of the Antel,who will come to visit us tomorrow.

That evening, we had an interesting encounter at the parish of San Sebastián in Ciudad Delgado. The parish priest, Father Juan Antonio Gutiérrez, invited me to a

meeting with the ministry leaders, but when I arrived, I found the church completely packed with faithful. We were supposed to hold the meeting with them, inviting them to understand the true mission and character of the Church and, based on this truth, discuss the divisions that exist among the faithful of that parish.

The traditional sectors and elements of renewal that, under the title of "Family of God," operate in pastoral ministry as requested by the Archdiocese, found expression in very candid contributions. All the contributions were very helpful. For my part, I repeatedly recommended unity, the transcendent meaning of the Church's work, and, above all, an ever deeper study of what the Church is, to guide our pastoral work toward building the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Tuesday, April 24, 1979.

This morning I went to Santa Tecla to hear confession and visit Father Isidro, who had an accident while traveling to Santa Ana; thank God, it wasn't serious and he's now recovering. After a brief stop at the Archbishop's offices,I went to theDomus Mariae to attend the Priestly Cooperative meeting. The priests were well attended, and the Cooperative's leaders provided detailed reports on the economic growth of our Priestly Cooperative, "Ars."

In the afternoon, I prepared with Monsignor Urioste for the radio interview that airs every Wednesday at 1:00 PM. Among the topics covered were my trip to Rome and my impressions of the bishops' meeting in Costa Rica. We also discussed radio interference and a conversation Monsignor Urioste and Father Pedraz, the radio director, had that day with the president of Antel.

Wednesday, April 25, 1979.

We devoted the entire morning to the Pastoral Council meeting. The ten Vicars and representatives of the religious and lay people involved in pastoral ministry were present. This body is taking shape, and I have great hopes for its coordination and leadership of pastoral care in all dioceses.

The nuns of the Holy Family School were kind enough to offer refreshments, so we could continue our meeting until 1:30 pm.

Monsignor Urioste, Vicar General, and Father Pedraz, head of the radio station, were received in the audience by the Minister of the Interior; the topic of the hearing was the interference caused to our Catholic radio station. This morning, at breakfast, we met with Father Pedraz, Father Moreno, Monsignor Urioste, and Bachelor Cuéllar to discuss the same issue of interference, after Father Pedraz and Monsignor Urioste had attended a meeting with the president of Antel. The president of Antel was very attentive and promised to do everything possible to prevent such interference.

We were informed of a very interesting conversation, in which Monsignor Urioste also pointed out to the minister the popularity of our radio station and the violation of the right to expression that any violation of our station represents.

Thursday, April 26, 1979.

It was a day of preparation for my trip to Rome. Above all, I'm bringing with me a collection of documents and declarations of solidarity with the Archdiocese, in case the matter needs to be addressed in Rome. But I will listen, as there have been several reports about our situation.

There have been many farewell visits, and the people are very warm. In the afternoon, I met with the major and minor seminarians. After expressing my admiration for the vocation the Lord has given us, I asked them to be faithful and loyal to this calling they have received from God. A series of questions followed, mostly concerning the pastoral ministry of our Holy Week.

It is comforting to see how our young seminary members, sharing pastoral life with the grassroots communities, identify with one another and, at the same time, bring to them the thought of the Gospel and of their Church.

I also celebrated the Eucharist with the Seminary Fathers and the entire youth group in the chapel. During his homily, he highlighted youth as a sign of renewal, restlessness, and exaltation toward bold things. He invited them to guide all these youthful impulses with evangelical and Christian criteria, so that their youth may be a continuous Easter. A Christ who rises never to die again!

I stayed up late at night packing for the next day.

Friday, April 27, 1979.

After celebrating Holy Mass at the Divine Providence Hospital, I was taken to the airport in a carriage operated by the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation. I boarded the Taca plane that took me to Guatemala City. The provincial of the congregation, who had granted me this trip to Rome, was waiting for me. We took an Iberia flight to Spain around noon. We stopped in Managua, then in Santo Domingo, where we had to wait three hours due to some minor damage to the plane.

We were able to browse the large, empty warehouse at that airport. And very late, almost at sunset, we departed for Spain. The flight was uneventful, flying over the sea all night. The passengers' attention was distracted by movies, meals, and, among other things, the delay. We arrived in Madrid around noon, after a very short night, on our way to Europe on a flight that would take us in the morning.

We failed to unite...

CHAPTER 13.

Year 1979.

Diary from April 28th to May 9th.

1979.

Saturday, April 28, 1979.

The night when you fly from America to Europe is an extremely short one. And we woke up on Saturday, April 28th, in Madrid; we were in Santo Domingo, and it was already noon this Saturday. And since we missed our connecting flight to Rome, due to the delay in Santo Domingo, they gave us a flight.on Alitalia, but we realized we hadn't checked in our two suitcases. When we realized this in Rome, where we arrived around 3:00 PM, we filed a complaint with Alitalia, who promised to process it only in Madrid.

But not content to wait for the outcome of the complaint, we thought that with the subsequent flights our bags would arrive that same afternoon, and so we waited until 10:00 PM, when the last flight arrived without our bags. Then, we became more expensive and we called the Alitalia representative to file the complaint and let him know we urgently needed our bags. He promised to send them to the hotel upon our arrival.

By taxi, a rather elderly but very kind man took us to the guesthouse of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation in Monte Mario. We met some Spanish bishops who were having dinner, having arrived late like us, and so we were able to share the dinner we hadn't eaten.

Thus passes another truly blessed day, because being in Rome, for me, is always a blessing from the Lord.

Sunday, April 29, 1979.

This dawn in Rome evokes so many memories! These landscapes, which I experienced during my theology studies, when I was ordained a priest, and during my first months of priesthood, have renewed my spirit. Now, with new responsibilities, I feel

that Rome is a blessing from the Lord, confirming my mission, my work, which God shares by granting me the joy of humbly collaborating in the establishment of his Kingdom in the world.

It is the day of the beatification of Father Francisco Coll, founder of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation.

But only today do I realize that not only will he be beatified, but also Father Labal, a Frenchman who worked to evangelize black people freed from slavery. Both figures, two great missionaries, two great evangelizers. The Pope emphasized this characteristic in his homily, which coincides with his main concerns for catechesis, for which he is preparing a forthcoming document drawn from the 1977 Synod, which specifically addressed catechesis.

Since I had no clothes, my suitcase was not arrived AThe bishop, the bishop of Tarragona, lent me a cassock and sash that fit me perfectly. This too was a providence from the Lord, because it allowed me to join the bishops in a position of great prestige during the beatification ceremony.

I saw the Holy Father up close, I appreciated that choir, that participation of the people. There is no doubt that the liturgical renewal has significantly transformed the triumphalism of the past into a true assembly of prayer and reflection.

The Pope, with his characteristic simplicity, without the gestational chair, as he walks together with all the concelebrants, is the object of ever-growing enthusiasm.

At the beatification, discovering, as always, in Bernini's glory, the two images of the two new blessed are greeted with warm applause and the Te Deum, the singing of the Glory to God in heaven. The readings then follow. The first reading is in Spanish in honor of Father Coll; the second in French in honor of Blessed Laval; and the Gospel is in Latin.

The Pope delivered a beautiful homily in which he united the glories of the two blessed and directed them towards the current concerns of the Church, that of true evangelization and catechesis of humanity.

When we left, it was almost noon. The Pope, though tired from the ceremony, received in audience the Dominicans and all those interested and participating in this beatification. And shortly after noon, he appeared, as usual, on the balcony of his room, from where he offered further reflections on the concept of catechesis and on the two new blessed, two exemplary evangelizers.

He said that for him it was an extremely important day because, for the first time, he was carrying out this service as pontiff to the Church, offering her two new examples of holiness and he hoped that they would be her great protectors in heaven.

His speech was interrupted several times by applause from the packed square. At the end, he recalled specific events of the week, expressed his congratulations, and joined in prayers for the many intentions from Rome and around the world. He mentioned the conflicts in Uganda and other parts of the world, asking for prayers for peace. And so, with this motivation, let us recite Regina Celi, the midday prayer to Our Lady, during Easter time.

Upon my return to the Dominican nuns' home, I met several familiar people among the nuns, bishops, and priests, as the nuns had organized a reception and lunch that proved to be extremely fraternal and lively.

I spent the afternoon relaxing, and in the evening, after dinner, I went out to explore the route that connects me to Piazza Risorgimento, which I'll use for my errands in Rome. It's just a short walk from the Gemelli Hospital, where bus line 50 terminates. Piazza Risorgimento is very close to the Vatican, where it also has its terminal.

It seems to me, therefore, a very useful service for my situation. After a stroll in St. Peter's Square, the window of the Pope's room was no longer lit; apparently he is under repair and lives elsewhere. I returned with the satisfaction of having experienced such a full and happy day in this immortal Rome.

Monday, April 30, 1979.

The Central American provincial of the Dominican Sisters, Mother Nieves, gave me the good news that Alitalia had responded, that they had found my bags and would collect them at the airport. I left for the Vatican to see the outcome of my request for an audience with the Holy Father.

A torrential downpour prevented me from walking any faster, and then I unexpectedly came upon the house where cassocks are made and all these ecclesiastical articles are sold, and I wasted a good part of the morning in this business, which, by the way, was very opportune because it gave me time to have two new cassocks made.

I bought a clerical habit and went to the Vatican, where, unfortunately, I couldn't find the Prefect of the Papal Household, who would have given me the details of the audience. I was simply told to ask the next day.

This afternoon, in a Dominican theater, some aspects of the life of the newly blessed Dominican Father Francisco Coll were masterfully presented. The performances were performed primarily by young people from Barcelona.

And from there we went to the Dominican Church, in Plaza Minerva, where we concelebrated, presided over by the Cardinal of Barcelona, about sixty bishops and priests, and the church was completely filled with nuns and pilgrims who had come for the pilgrimage, for the beatification of Father Coll. It was an impressive concelebration, a new reason for sanctification for the congregation founded by this illustrious Dominican. For my part, I felt the joy of this life of the Church, always fruitful in holiness.

During the evening dinner we were shown more than one hundred and fifty portraits taken during the beatification ceremony, so that we underlined those that we wanted to buy; but since they are extremely expensive, more than three dollars each, we had to limit our requests.

.

Tuesday, May 1, 1979.

In Rome, on May 1st, Labor Day, all commercial activities are suspended, and even buses serving various destinations stop running. To take advantage of this day, however, I had to take rather expensive taxis, but this allowed me to go to the Papal Household to inquire again about my audience with the Pope. However, the Papal

Household, the prefecture of the Papal Household, was also closed. And although a Swiss Guard let me knock on the door, I realized there was no point in waiting.

I then went to the Generalate of the Jesuit Fathers, where an assistant to the Father General, coming from South America, received me very kindly, saying that those from Central America would remain there until the afternoon. This also gave me hope of an audience with Father Arrupe. After learning my name, the Father became much more attentive and grateful for what the Society of Jesus had done in our Archdiocese.

Then I went to the Generalate of the Oblates of Divine Love, where I pleasantly surprised Mother General, Mother Gloria. There I also greeted Mother Valle and all the sisters of the Superior Council. They invited me to lunch with them.shared momentsVery friendly. The Mother General and Mother Juana, a friend from our previous visit, were kind enough to accompany me by carriage to my inn, where the Dominican nuns are staying, in Monte Mario.

The afternoon was dedicated to the 6:00 pm celebration in the splendid Basilica of the Heart of Mary, where the Claretian Fathers, symbolizing their long-standing friendship with the newly blessed Father Coll, invited the Dominicans. The Father General of the Dominicans and the Father General of the Claretians assisted the main celebrant, Cardinal Tarancón, whom I greeted and who, during my visit, also kindly offered me his home in Madrid.

The celebration was splendid, just like yesterday; about 60 bishops and priests participated, and the large church was completely packed with nuns and pilgrims. The Father General of the Claretians preached on the similarities between these two saints, St. Anthony Mary Claret and Father Francis Coll. Upon my return home, I was informed that

Father Arrupe was very interested in speaking with me and that I should arrange a visit, which I will do tomorrow, God willing.

Wednesday, May 2, 1979.

Today I attended the Pope's general audience. It took place in St. Peter's Square, attended by approximately 130,000 pilgrims. Among them were the large group of Dominican nuns and pilgrims who had come for the beatification of Father Coll, as well as the religious and pilgrims for the beatification of Father Labal, and many other pilgrims who completely filled the square.

The Pope exits the bell tower and travels across the square in a jeep, warmly greeting everyone. The crowd, naturally, applauds as he passes. As he exits the jeep and heads toward the central seat, he spends several more minutes chatting and shaking hands with those present. From the lectern, he invokes the name of the Holy Trinity and begins his address after the secretary points out the various Italian-speaking groups. The Pope addresses the theme of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as we are beginning the Marian month, which coincides with Easter.

From the Pope's mouth and heart come profound and pleasant concepts, culminating in a sense of nostalgia when he mentions the patron saint of his people, Our Lady of Czestochowa, whom he visited at the beginning of May, when the feasts are celebrated.There Celebrations of the patron saint and will not be able to be present today, but at the beginning of June he will be present with all the bishops and other pilgrims who will go to meet the Pope during his visit to his country.

The Pope also delivered his greeting and abbreviated message in French, German, Spanish, Catalan, and Portuguese. After finishing his address, he called all the bishops, about forty, to his throne, and together with the Pope, we imparted the blessing. Then he greeted them one by one, right there on the throne. Shake his hand and ask for a blessing for the Archdiocese of San Salvador, he told me that we should speak in private, which - I told him - was my greatest desire and that I had requested an audience.

I hope the Pope will grant this private audience, and for this reason, I did not give him the documents I had prepared as a reminder, in case the audience was not possible, so that he could handle several matters that needed to complement the Apostolic Visitor's report. In the reminder, he asked the Holy Father for guidance, following the information the Apostolic Visitor must undoubtedly have provided in great detail. I also left him a photocopy of the letter I sent in November with the various problems that, as Metropolitan, I reported to His Holiness regarding the situation of the Church and State in our country.

Right there, leaving the Pope's residence, I spoke with Monsignor Martín and Monsignor Monduzzi, those in charge of organizing the audiences, to insist on the audience I had requested before Easter. They gave me hope, but for next week.

I will insist because it is my greatest desire and my greatest need to speak with the Pope during this visit to Rome.

In the afternoon, I went to the Jesuit General Curia, where I greeted Father Giovanni Bosco and with whom we arranged a conference call on Wednesday, which will be broadcast on our radio station Ysax. In Salvador, Monsignor Urioste participated in this dialogue, and the discussion focused on the various ways in which I have

encountered Rome, particularly Sunday's beatification ceremony, today's audience, and also the Queen's prayer.Call it back in St. Peter's Square.

I reported that the Pope, during this short period of my stay in Rome, exercised a very abundant doctrinal teaching, mainly regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary, regarding catechesis, of which the two blessed were a model, regarding religious life, which was seen very well represented in Rome on the occasion of these beatifications of two religious.

And I also referred to how the Pope congratulated andI was grateful to all those who dedicate themselves to catechesis, recommending them to be like the two blessed, living witnesses, who truly live the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as the Lord said in last Sunday's Gospel: "He who keeps the commandments knows me."

The Jesuits have invited me to lunch tomorrow with Father Arrupe, as well as other interested Jesuits, to discuss the situation in El Salvador and other matters that will be of great benefit to me. I have also received an invitation from the Claretian Fathers to dine tomorrow at the Church of the Heart of Mary with the Father General of the Claretians. I will do so with deep gratitude for the Claretian communities serving in our Archdiocese.

Thursday, May 3, 1979.

The Spanish bishops and priests who were present at Father Coll's beatification and who were staying at the Dominican nuns' residence returned home for the day. I was largely alone, but I spent the day taking care of some business. First, I went to the Prefecture of the Apostolic Household to arrange an audience with the Pope, which I will

likely have on Wednesday or Thursday of next week, because they explained to me that many bishops are on their ad limina visits and that they have priority during these days.

For my part, I explained the urgency of seeing the Pope, given the situation in my diocese and my distance, and my desire to dedicate my time to other matters as well. However, I realize this and must be patient as I wait my turn.

I then went to request an audience with Cardinal Baggio, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and Cardinal Pironio, Prefect of the Congregation for Religious. I met the latter, on a rather friendly basis.

I went to lunch at the General Curia of the Jesuit Fathers. They honored me by allowing me to sit at Father Arrupe's table, with whom I spoke before lunch about the ecclesial situation in my country. He also told me about several Jesuit projects in Latin America. Father Juan Bosco Estrada, a dear friend of the General Curia, allowed me to use his room after lunch for a nap. I also spoke with several Jesuits interested in the situation in the country, which is very important given the global work being done here.to transport.

Then I visited,Low Inone spring afternoon, the Church of the Twelve Apostles, under whose altar of confession is the tomb of the apostles St. Philip and St. James the Less, whose feast is liturgically celebrated on this day, May 3.

I forgot to mention that this morning I paid another visit to St. Peter's Basilica, and standing beside the altars, so dear to St. Peter and his current successors in this century, I prayed for fidelity, for my Christian faith, and for the courage, if necessary, to die as all these martyrs died, or to live consecrating my life as these modern successors of Peter

have done. More than any other tomb, I was struck by the simplicity of the tomb of Pope Paul VI.

Today I visited Gregorian University. I admired the great hall and all those cloisters that remind me of my student days. I remembered so many things!

I then met Father López Gall, with whom I had a very interesting conversation that allowed me to better understand the widespread opinions about my work in various sectors of the Roman Curia. He told me it was all very positive and that I should continue. He also spoke to me, with the simplicity of a friend, about the negative judgment some had of Father Jon Sobrino's theological writings.

Finally, I went to dinner at the Generalate of the Claretian Fathers, sharing the main table with the Father General, who will leave for Germany tomorrow to celebrate the passing of his predecessor, who is now over eighty. I recalled with them my days in the minor seminary and also my first Mass, celebrated in the church attached to this center of Claretian authority, the Church of the Heart of Mary.

And toAsk me aIn an autograph for his guestbook, I wrote: "Today I returned to my roots... While dining with you, I remembered the minor seminary I attended with the beloved Claretian Fathers. And it was in this place that I celebrated my first Mass in 1945. Thank you and blessings."

Friday, May 4, 1979.

Concerned about the main issue of my visit to Rome, after attending Father Coll's beatification, I returned to the Prefecture of the Papal Household to expedite an audience with the Holy Father. I couldn't find Monsignor Martín, but I left the clearest address to which I could send a reply, hoping to be able to contact him by phone when he's in the office.

This attitude toward a pastor of a diocese has not ceased to concern me greatly, even though I requested an audience in advance and the response is being left to time. I even fear that it will not be granted, because there are many bishops on their ad limina visits and there are also other criteria for prioritizing other requests. I have left everything in God's hands, telling Him that, for my part, I have done everything possible, that, despite everything, I believe in and love the Holy Church and will always be faithful, with His grace, to the Holy See and the Magisterium of the Pope. I also understand the human, limited, and imperfect side of His Holy Church, which is always an instrument of salvation for humanity and which I desire to serve unreservedly.

I was nourished by these supernatural and profoundly ecclesial criteria during my visit with Monsignor De Nicoló, an old friend from the Sacred Congregation for Education in the Faith, where I spoke with great affection and fraternal trust about my relationship with the bishops, the government, and the nuncio. He understood that, given my temperament and education, he was certain that the negative news about my work as an archiepiscopal minister was exaggerated. His words were very enlightening and encouraging. I thank the Lord.

I immediately went to visit the Community of the Sisters of Bethany. They are four Salvadoran and Guatemalan nuns who run a house for university students at Via Aurelia 172. They offered me lunch there, and the young people, some of whom are now

professionals, were very interested in learning about the situation in my country and arranged a meeting for me with other journalists. In the evening, before dinner. He gladly accepts, given the sincerity and Catholic atmosphere in which La Prensa operates, which he serves.

I immediately went to visit the Passionist Sisters who take care of the house of the Passionist Fathers, the General Curia of the Passionist Fathers and the retreat house, annexed to the famous Church of Saints John and Paul, where the founder of the Passionist congregations, Saint Paul of the Cross, is buried.

Most of these ten nuns are Mexican and know El Salvador well. They were extremely happy with my visit and invited me to have lunch with them the following day and to celebrate a Holy Hour. I accepted, seeing their affection and prayers addressed to God for the situation of our Salvadoran Church.

They were kind enough to accompany me to the nuns' community in Bethany, where it was time for dinner and the press interview I mentioned earlier.

Saturday, May 5, 1979.

Today I reiterated my desire for an audience with the Pope. Archbishop Martin went to see his assistant and then happily left, saying: "I have good news for you; you will be received on Monday. Tomorrow, Sunday afternoon, the usual card announcing the time of the audience will arrive." I thanked him profusely and, of course, thanked God.

Afterwards, I went to Piazza Minerva to search among the sacred art artists for the staff I'd always wanted, similar to the one used by Paul VI and still used by John Paul II. In sacred art, I found someone who would make it for me, and Mother Gloria promised to find someone who would.it would be coastal, so that it is not an expense that might seem to discredit me. It will therefore be a gift from the people and will represent the Holy Christ in the form of a staff.

I went to lunch with the Passionist Sisters of the Convent of Saints John and Paul. There I rested and celebrated Holy Mass, preaching to them on the theme of vocation and the collaboration that all of us, called to collaborate with God in the work and spirit of the Good Shepherd among all, must provide. The Passionist Sisters took me to my inn, where I dined with the Dominican Sisters and shared evening recreation with them.

Sunday, May 6, 1979.

After having celebrated privately in the chapel of the Dominican Sisters, I went to St. Peter's Square to join in the recitation of the Regina Coeli.Celi,which the Pope performs every Sunday at noon. Mother Gloria and Sister Giovanni were waiting for me there, and then we went out with them to lunch at Castel Gandolfo. It was a lovely walk, except that the weather was very cloudy and it rained at times.

And in the picturesque dining room, overlooking the lake, it was very humid and the landscape was completely obscured. But I realized how picturesque the place where the Holy Father spends his days off during his vacations was. It wasn't a pleasant setting; perhaps the immense Castel Gandolfo estate, the Pope's summer residence, stood out too much in the midst of that atmosphere.

Monday, May 7, 1979.

I woke up, finishing preparing the documents I intend to present to the Holy Father at his audience. There are four reports from foreign commissions that have come to El Salvador to study the country's situation. They are documents of solidarity, of denunciation, including my Nobel Prize nomination, and others that emerged after Monsignor Quarracino's apostolic visit to complete that visit. I also brought him the letter I wrote in November, which I doubted had been delivered.

At 12:20, I was received in a private audience by the Holy Father. Sitting at his desk, he also offered me a chair. He told me to put on the kippah, which I had removed and was holding in my hand. He began asking me about the situation in the country. He politely invited him to follow up on the memorandum I had written, which he gladly accepted.

We started reading, and I pulled out the documents. When I pulled out the folder containing foreign information on the situation in the country, he smiled, seeing that it was a very thick volume and that there wouldn't be time to look through it. I apologized and told him I was commissioning a study and getting a summary, but that I was interested in getting an idea of how impartial criteria were used.sketchthe situation of injustice and abuse that exists in our country. I also gave him a folder with a portrait of Father Octavio, who is dead, and a lot of information about that murder.

After handing him each folder, along with a brief explanation, the Pope began his comments, in line with the memorandum's final point, which referred to a dialogue aimed

at sincerely seeking the Pope's thoughts and better serving our people. He acknowledged that pastoral work is very difficult in the political environment in which I operate. He recommended great balance and prudence, especially when making specific accusations, saying that it was best to stick to principles, as there was a risk of making errors or mistakes when making specific accusations.

I clarified, and he agreed with me, stating that there are circumstances-I cited, for example, the case of Father Octavio-where one must be very specific because the injustice and abuse were very real. He reminded me of his situation in Poland, where he had to deal with a non-Catholic government and with which he had to help the Church grow despite the difficulties. He attached great importance to the unity of the episcopate. Recalling his pastoral time in Poland, he stated that this was the main issue: maintaining episcopal unity.

I also made it clear to him that I was what he most desired, but that I kept in mind that a union must not be false, but based on the Gospel and the truth.

He referred to the report of the apostolic visitation of Monsignor Quarracino, who acknowledged an extremely delicate situation and recommended an apostolic administrator, sede plena, as a solution to the pastoral deficiencies and the lack of unity among the bishops.

At the end of the visit, during which he gave me the opportunity to express my thoughts and his own, he invited me to take a photograph and gave me some devotional gifts. He set aside the files to continue the series of audiences still pending, and I left satisfied with this meeting, but concerned to realize that negative information about my pastoral work was affecting me, even though deep down I remembered his

recommendation of "boldness and courage, but at the same time measured by prudence and a necessary balance."

Even though my initial impression wasn't entirely satisfactory, I believe it was an extremely useful visit and conversation. He was very frank, and I learned that we shouldn't always expect blanket approval, but that it's more helpful to receive feedback that can improve our work.

After the audience, Father Toral was waiting for me and took me to his community of Josephite Fathers and Brothers in Villa Santa, where I had lunch. Mother María Castro Llerena also arrived, having traveled from her hometown, an hour and a minute from Rome, to greet me. We remembered her cousin, Monsignor Castro Peña, and shared other memories of our beloved homeland. She is Salvadoran.

In the afternoon, Mother Gloria and Sister Juana drove me in their van to visit the artist of the crosier, where Mother Gloria obtained a significant reduction in the price and improved the design of the work. We then went to pick up the vestments I had made at the clergy's tailoring shop, and I dined again with the Oblates of Divine Love before returning to my inn with the Dominican nuns.

Tuesday, May 8, 1979.

In Rome, time can be like eating one. I had planned something before the audience with Cardinal Baggio at 11:00 a.m. However, I only managed to make a few small adjustments to the tailor, who hadn't yet finished my work. I headed to St. Peter's Square to entrust myself to the great pontiffs who rest in the Vatican crypts and who have given

so much inspiration and guidance to my life, and to spend this moment of reflection before discussing very important matters with the Congregation for Bishops, presided over by Cardinal Baggio.

In St. Peter's Square, I met Monsignor Eduardo Cassuli, who was secretary of the Nunciature, I believe when Monsignor Torpigliani was in El Salvador. He was very affectionate, he left me with many memories, and he understood my difficult situation. He said he was always remembering me and praying that I might be a pastor worthy of these circumstances.

The conversation with Cardinal Baggio was very cordial, although I expected a bit of harshness, as had happened last year. He was very eager to meet me and told me he would be surprised if, having come to Rome, I didn't attend. I explained that from the first day of my arrival in Rome, I had sought this audience, which, due to his commitments, had not been granted to me.

He expressed his concerns, especially regarding the division among the bishops and the situation of the auxiliary bishop. And he was very frank in acknowledging the auxiliary bishop's error in signing the permit to amend Caritas's statutes, which the Archbishop himself had to sign. He, as Vicar General, should have accepted it, and if he knew the Archbishop didn't agree, he was wrong to do so. But he said I had also been very harsh in making the decision to dismiss him and leaving it pending.

I tried to explain this whole situation because, moreover, I noticed that among the reasons Monsignor Revelo had given for this act was that Caritas was politicized and had fallen into the hands of the guerrillas. He also used the pretext that I was in the clinic, ill. I explained to the Cardinal that none of these things were sufficient reasons for this act.

He referred to the apostolic visit already, a suggestion the Pope had already mentioned in his conversation yesterday, namely, to resolve the situation by appointing an apostolic administrator, sede plena; but Cardinal Baggio considered this an impractical suggestion, since he saw no one among the current bishops who could be such an apostolic administrator and who agreed with me.

And taking him abroad seemed absurd, given the situation in our country. Therefore, the matter is still being evaluated, and, for my part, I have expressed my willingness to resolve the situation to the best of my ability.allow.

I referred to the reports presented to the Pope, which are impartial and reveal a situation of genuine persecution against the Church. I was referring specifically to the OAS report and its insistence on recommending the government prevent the systematic persecution of the Catholic Church in its mission of evangelization. The Cardinal was very kind when he told me: "We are not dealing with enemies, but with workers for the same cause, and we are, of course, in 90 percent agreement. And that is why 100 percent is the truth and the Gospel."

I told him that this word had given me great encouragement and that the depression I had felt after the audience with the Holy Father had given me hope here, in my conversation with him, that my situation and that of my diocese could be resolved if we continued to seek it with good will and love for the Church.

He seemed quite satisfied, we talked about other things, and then our time was up. He gave me two books and said he was available to help me in any way he could in my service to the Church.

I left feeling satisfied, and providentially, on my way out, I met Monsignor De Nicoló, a great friend, with whom I told him I wanted to discuss, confidentially and for spiritual guidance, my state of mind of yesterday and today. He gave me very clear insights, inspired by a great love for the Church, and how virtue, especially humility, in these cases is a very sure key to finding a solution. He told me to rest assured about the goodwill that reigns in the Roman Curia, which has changed enormously, and that, as someone who has lived it, I can tell you there is a great willingness to help the Church's servants everywhere and in every way. He said that the influence of the current pontiff was very beneficial for the Roman Curia and for the entire Church.

He gave me some rules of thumb to address at theSecretariat of State, referring to the previous suggestion, that I take everything as a voice from God seeking, even in my situation, a solution that will be of great benefit to the Church.

I should be very careful not to overreact, because by suggesting this idea of an apostolic administrator, the Holy Father and Cardinal Baggio might seek my reaction, and my reaction, if negative, could ruin everything. That I should be humble and patient, and write to the Secretariat of State, sharing my impressions and my suggestion, for example, that a potential nuncio who would be a good fit with the Archbishop could fill the suggested role for a possible, but difficult, apostolic administrator.

I think I understand the idea well and I will try to put it into practice with that goodwill for the Church which, thanks be to God, I have always tried to preserve and increase.

Then I went to Vatican Radio, where I received an invitation from Father Suárez, responsible for broadcasts for Latin America, and where I recorded an interview with him about the situation of the Church in El Salvador, my work, and my impressions of the visit to the Holy Father.

In short, I described our situation and my work, as I intended, and above all I said that I left the visit to the Holy Father very optimistic, because I realized that he knows how to listen and clearly seeks to understand the reality of our Latin American world. Therefore, I believe there is a great responsibility for all of us who have the honor and joy of speaking directly with the Pope, to inform him, not according to our own way of seeing things, but, as far as possible, about the sincere reality of the Church in our countries.

With Father Suárez and the director of programs for Spain, I went to the Jesuit house, where all the radio writers and operators live-about thirty people-to have lunch with them and then share a very fraternal conversation after dinner. Father Juan Bosco, like the other day, granted me a delightful nap in his room. Afterward, Father Juan Bosco accompanied me to book my return ticket, via Barcelona and Madrid, to visit the cradle of this Dominican congregation, which was kind enough to organize my trip to Europe for the beatification of Father Coll.

Then I went to collect my work from my friend's tailor shop,Mangenelli, who was very kind in all his dealings with me. I also bought some prayer cards to display in all the parish houses of His Holiness John Paul II, but the famous Sopranos sale seemed like a hive of buyers, and it was very difficult for me to buy other items. I ended the day with dinner with the Oblate Mothers, who put their vehicle at my disposal, both to take me to

their house and back to my inn with the Dominican Sisters, where I packed my bags this evening for tomorrow's trip.

Wednesday, May 9, 1979.

After thanking the Dominican Sisters, represented by their Superior General and the Provincial of Central America, for the generous gift of a trip to Rome,congratulating them I haveI saluted all the ceremonies and celebrations of the founder, Blessed Father Francisco Coll, because this very night I will take the return plane passing through Barcelona, Madrid and El Salvador.

I then headed to see Monsignor Pironio, with whom I had scheduled an audience for 11:30 a.m. Traffic near the Vatican was stifling. The general audience draws crowds of people and vehicles, large buses of tourists and pilgrims filling all the streets adjacent to St. Peter's Square.

But, a few minutes late, I arrived and had to wait a little longer for Cardinal Pironio, who welcomed me so fraternally and cordially that this meeting alone was enough to fill me with comfort and encouragement. I confidentially explained my situation to my diocese and to the Holy See.

He opened his heart to me, telling us how much he too must have suffered, how deeply he felt the problems of Latin America, and how they were not fully understood by the Supreme Ministry of the Church, yet we must continue to work, spreading the truth of our reality as much as possible. And he told me: "The worst thing you can do is become discouraged. Courage, Romero!" he repeated several times. And thanking him for the

further consultations, for the long and fraternal conversation, I left, leaving in my heart a new strength from my trip to Rome.

As I was leaving the Sacred Congregation for Religious, where Cardinal Pironio is a perfect example, I stopped in St. Peter's Square, where the Pope was still preaching his messages in various languages, and the people were welcoming him with fervor and applause. But in the outskirts, where I was, there was a lot of distraction. Young people and tourists, more interested in… distracted. And they didn't listen to the pastor's voice. This gives me the size of our audience, however, we must always sow. And theBoardHe did this tirelessly, acting as a shepherd who gives abundant food for doctrine to the people, on whom it depends whether they want to accept it or not.

I then went to the Jesuit General Curia, where the good Father John Bosco took me to visit the garden and then to lunch, and lent me his room for a nap. Afterward, he concelebrated the Eucharist with me. He then did me the favor of calling Monsignor Urioste in El Salvador, with whom we had a conversation that was recorded for the broadcast on Radio Ysax.

He spoke to me about the difficult situation of violence in the country. The most serious aspect was the clash between the Popular Revolutionary Block and the Security Forces near the Cathedral. And in the Cathedral of San Salvador, he told me that nine bodies lay there, and it is believed there are more.

I took this opportunity to send you a message of peace and convey the Pope's thoughts. During the audience, he recalled the assassination of Aldo Moro, which occurred a year ago.

After the telephone transmission to El Salvador with the information provided to me by Monsignor Urioste and the communications I made to him, especially from the private audience with the Holy Father, applying everything to the tragic situation of that day in the Cathedral of San Salvador, I went to make my last visit to St. Peter's Basilica, next to the tomb of St. Pius X. I prayed intensely, keeping in mind all the intercessors who mean the world to me, especially the tombs of St. Peter and the recent popes. I then went to purchase some souvenirs on sale near St. Peter's Square, where they are distributed.the ObserverRomano and with the Oblate Mothers of Divine Love, I headed to the airport.

The journey from Rome to Barcelona was very uneventful. And in Barcelona, at eleven o'clock in the evening, Mother Grau and another Dominican nun were waiting for me. They took me in a taxi, driven by a very friendly and chatty driver, through all the main streets of Barcelona, especially near the Church of the Holy Family. We then headed to Vic, where I was hosted in a small house that the Dominican nuns have dedicated to the hospitality of priests.

Tomorrow we plan to visit the birthplace of Father Francisco Coll. This town of Vich also means a lot to me, as it is the birthplace of Father Claret, whose missionaries inspired my early years in the seminary.

CHAPTER 14.

Year 1979.

Diary from May 10th to 28th.

1979.

Thursday, May 10, 1979.

In Spain, dawn is an hour earlier, due to the official changeover between Italy and Spain. It seemed very early, yet it was already eight in the morning. I quickly got ready and went to breakfast with the nuns of the Dominican house in Vic. It's a large community, as they run the school, the infirmary for the elderly nuns, and other very fruitful apostolates in this city where the congregation was born.

After breakfast, I was accompanied by Mother Grau and another nun, who organizes the archive, and a series of memorabilia of Father Coll, visit Thisarchive, this museum, where there is also extensive information on the activities of the nuns around the world, has allowed me to bring this vitality of the congregation as a response. The generous one invited me to participate in the beatification of their founder.

Next, we visited Vic Cathedral, rebuilt twice, having recently been a victim of the Spanish Civil War. But it is beautiful and displays a healthy dose of modernism; in the crypt, you can still see the original church, which was subsequently rebuilt in two, to this day. The paintings, designed three times, as I was told, were lost along the way the first time, stolen. The second time, they were destroyed by the communists during the Civil War, and finally, the artist who was independently creating this decoration in Paris created the design that now splendidly adorns the Cathedral.

The cloister, in its original Gothic style, is very interesting. Afterward, I was fortunate enough to visit the tomb of Father Antonio María Claret, founder of the Claretians. There is a rich reliquary and a magnificent church, where the body is the centerpiece, adorned with a silver mask and episcopal vestments.

And, above all, the places that witnessed the birth of this Marian thistle religious institute have been reconstructed in their original form. A portrait in the background shows the height, 1.50 meters, of Father Claret and the other companions of the foundation; names I have known since my first years in the seminary, when I began my priestly formation with this congregation, which was later brought by Bishop Dueñas to San Miguel. I cherished these memories with the Fathers, who thanked me deeply for the visit, and I thanked them deeply for their always warm welcome.

After lunch, we traveled to the birthplace of Father Francisco Coll. It's located about 40 kilometers from Vich, along a picturesque road. On a bright spring evening, the humble village perched against a mountain evokes the origins of that saint, whose house the nuns he founded have restored for their community. They also have a retreat house with an extremely peaceful and beautiful view, adorned with gardens, where one truly feels close, through nature, to Our Lord.

I also visited the church where he was baptized and, upon returning, celebrated Mass in the small, primitive house of Father Coll. I celebrated a very intimate Eucharist with four nuns, evoking the great needs of my country. With the nuns, we prayed fervently that our Church and the life of our country would find a solution according to God's heart.

Friday, May 11, 1979.

After celebrating Mass in the chapel of the elderly and sick nuns, where I invited them to join in prayer for the needs of the Church and who were a great strength for the universal Church, we set out after breakfast, still along the Manresa road, which we traveled very close to the Manresa cave where Saint Ignatius made his spiritual exercises and wrote his famous book of exercises.

We then drove along a beautiful road to the monastery of Montserrat. It was the hour when the Benedictine monks were preparing to sing the abbey mass, in Catalan, but with truly moving piety and a Gregorian rhythm. There were many people. Afterward, I recited the rosary to Our Lady of Montserrat. And we returned to Barcelona. Mother Grau was very kind during this visit to Montserrat, Vic, and the village of Padre Coll, and she generously shared her kindness with me at the airport, dropping me off on the air shuttle, the name given to an hourly service between Barcelona and Madrid.

In Madrid, Sister Raimunda, also from the same congregation, was waiting for me. She had been expelled from Guatemala and was delighted to see me. She took me to her residence where, along with other nuns, they run a beautiful residence for employees and students. They do a lot of good there. Contact us: Father Pedro, a Passionist, who had come with María, the writer for Vida Nueva, who wrote a beautiful report, the proceeds of which were donated to the poor of the archdiocese.

I was delighted to meet her and greet Father Pedro Ferradas, sharing many memories and impressions of our life in El Salvador. We scheduled a press interview for the evening, and after lunch and a siesta, I went out with the nuns to visit their retreat

house, which they have in the beautiful mountains, about 50 kilometers from Madrid. The house is called "El Roble," and many people come there for days of spiritual retreat or communion.

After dinner in Madrid, some journalists were there, not only to interview me, but also to converse in close and fraternal intimacy about the situation of the Church, their fears for Latin America, their impressions of the Pope, and a series of concerns. I was very pleased that they shared with us the problems of our Latin America.

I told them that they had a great mission for the Church in this sense, since they were sensitive to our problems in Europe, where I noticed a lot of indifference or ignorance regarding the problems of our America.

I had dinner at ten o'clock in the evening in Madrid, and the Raimunda sisters and another person, who is a very good driver, accompanied me to the airport, where I said goodbye, thanking them for all their kindness in Europe, and went to wait for the plane that would leave at 2:55 in the morning, arriving at 8:30 in the morning, El Salvador time.

Saturday, May 12, 1979.

This Saturday, May 12th, dawn broke in Costa Rica after a very long night, eight hours longer than usual for the flight from Europe to America. We passed through San Juan, Puerto Rico; San José, Costa Rica; and arrived in El Salvador promptly at 8:30. It was an uneventful journey. I dedicated it to prayer, to placing myself in God's presence,

asking Him to enlighten me and help us resolve the grave situation I am about to encounter in the country.

It was pouring rain at the airport. We disembarked under umbrellas. I saw several friends, priests and lay people, waiting for me, also very faithful Dominican nuns, ready to carry out such a generous work as granting me this trip to the beatification of their founder. After saying goodbye at the Ilopango gate, I took the nuns' car and headed to my residence, after briefly speaking with Monsignor Urioste about the problems and agreeing that we would go that evening...we will meet with others who can help me learn about the situation in the Diocese during this tragic week, where I have been told so many violent and tragic things have happened, but with God's help we will be able to shed light on them starting from the Gospel and the Church.

At the airport there were several journalists taking photographs, but none of them asked me any questions.

Foreign journalists have announced their intention to interview me tomorrow, after Mass, which will include the rosary, since the cathedral remains occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block.

However, some journalists arrived unexpectedly, and I met with them, although I told them I wasn't yet fully qualified to express opinions on the latest events, as I had just arrived and had a meeting that evening to analyze the situation. Indeed, that evening we met with Monsignor Urioste, Father Moreno, Father Brito, Doris Osegueda, and the high school student Cuéllar. We discussed many interesting aspects of the country's current situation.

We thought it would be helpful to dedicate one or more days to reflecting on some issues that hinder a better understanding of the current situation and, in any case, to deepening our analysis of the Church and our political and social situation. After this very interesting conversation on the general situation, we prepared a summary of the week, which I will use for the following day's homily.

Two young people from the Popular Revolutionary Block came to ask me to celebrate a mass in the Cathedral, in supplication for the four new people killed by state forces while they were engaged in their organization's activities.

I discussed this request with the Fathers who were present at the meeting; I told them that it was difficult for me to understand how they could not.celebrate TheOfficial Mass at eight o'clock in the Cathedral, because it is occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block. How could a Mass be celebrated simply because the Block requests it, even for the deceased, in a Cathedral they occupy? And therefore, our Mass would appear subordinate to the Block's strategy and ideals.

So I proposed to them that, as Christians,we had We will celebrateThe suffrage for these deceased, but we will do it in the Basilica. And the Basilica's parish priest, Father Cortés, will be in charge of organizing this liturgy. They agreed, and I believe one of those unforeseen problems, difficult to resolve due to the complications it can cause, has been resolved.

Sunday, May 13, 1979.

Since the Cathedral was busy, this Sunday's Mass was held in the Church of the Rosary, which was completely packed, with people still outside. A warm crowd greeted me with warm applause as I entered. I donned my vestments and, together with the Dominican Fathers and seminarians, we made our way to the altar. Among them were the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation and some students from their schools, as this Mass was intended to be a tribute to the new blessed, Blessed Francis Coll Gitard, and they, the Dominican Sisters, had been entrusted with organizing the liturgy for that day.

The homily was an account of my trip to Rome, primarily to attend the beatification of Father Coll, at the invitation and under the patronage of the Dominican Sisters. My pilgrimage to Spain, my impressions of the events in El Salvador, and the doctrinal focus of my homily were the Gospel, life, and the branches, which inspired me to choose the theme "Grace as a Gift of Easter."

With this teaching, I focused on the reality we experienced in El Salvador this week, particularly the massacre of May 8th. Anyone seeking more information on the clarification of the national reality during this tragic week can read the homily transcribed Sunday after Sunday, which contains a verbatim account of what I said on that occasion.

Many journalists and television crews were present at the Mass, recording many details of our Mass. After the Mass, we had an interview with them in the Rosario parish school hall. It was very interesting, as the questions raised very timely and pressing issues, related to the current situation in the country and around the world.

Then I went to lunch with the Dominican nuns at the Fatima College of Santa Tecla, where the Dominican Fathers, the Marists of Santa Tecla and the various communities/religious Dominicans whoThey work in our Archdiocese. And this was the

highlight; I also forgot that last night, invited by American journalists, we were at the Hotel Camino Real to watch a documentary about what happened in the Cathedral, filmed by a television reporter.

Unfortunately, the film is currently being shown abroad, but the journalist will tell us about its screening tomorrow. It was the highlight of our first Sunday back from Rome.

Monday, May 14, 1979.

The first morning spent at the Archdiocesan Curia after returning from Rome was intense. In the pastoral sphere, we had an interview with Father Benito Tovar, Vicar of the Department of La Libertad, who introduced the young Astul Guirola, who has completed his theology studies and belongs to the Diocese of Santa Ana. He could be ordained a priest to work temporarily in our Archdiocese.

I gave him some letters supporting the request for permission he will submit to his bishop, Monsignor Barrera. Greetings to several priests who have come to the Curia and to the nuns with whom, thank God, I share pastoral and ecclesial concerns.

The most notable event was in the area of relations with politics and diplomacy, as I received a visit from the Peruvian ambassador, who brought a request from the Venezuelan ambassador, captured by the Popular Revolutionary Block in his own embassy, and who asked the Church to intervene. For my part, I promised him all my goodwill, but we need also that the request comes from the Block, since mediation implies a request from both parties.

However, I promised to examine the request further and, of course, convey to the Venezuelan Ambassador the Church's consolation and the assurance that we fully intend to contribute to normalizing this situation. I also expressed the desire of a special envoy from France to normalize the occupation of his own embassy, where the Ambassador and others are being held hostage.

I also promised this gentleman our full assistance and invited him to the meeting we were holding with the Vicar General, Monsignor Urioste, with the heads of the Press and Communications Secretariat, Father Rafael Moreno and Father Pedraz, Father Fabián Amaya, and with the secretary, Father Brito.

With all of them and with the French envoy, we have studied all the possibilities for the Church to act effectively in this desire, in which she is also involved, since the Cathedral is occupied by the same Block and this morning it was learned that they have also occupied the churches of Suchitoto and Apopa.

In the afternoon, we also learned that the church in Aguilares had been occupied. It was decided that the most urgent need was to contact the Block's leaders, and the French envoy offered to do so. Through the occupiers of his embassy and having already secured the National University, he will summon the Block's leaders to this meeting. A representative of the church will be present, composed of Father Fabián Amaya, Father Brito, and the head of legal assistance, Dr. Infieri Roberto Cuéllar.

In the afternoon, these three representatives met with the Vicar General and the Information Secretariat to present clear concepts for the meeting, but unfortunately, they were the only ones present, along with representatives of the Block, who refused to proceed until representatives of the relevant embassies were present, primarily the French

representative who had invited them. And so, despite all our efforts, we were unable to return; we continue to pray and hope, because a solution risks deteriorating.

A large demonstration by the Popular Revolutionary Block has been announced for tomorrow to commemorate the May 8 killings by the National Police.

Finally, I went to dinner with the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love to deliver correspondence from the Generalate and personal greetings from the Superior General, who was so kind to me during my stay in Rome.

In the afternoon there was a note of great comfort. The appeal I made on Sunday in the homily to the nurses had celebrated aEucharist in the Chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital, which was attended with great enthusiasm and the chapel was full of nurses;concelebrate withI, Monsignor José López Sandoval, ecclesiastical advisor to the national nursing movement. I sent them a message in which I invited them to see in every patient the twofold face of Christ: a suffering, aching, dying face, and the glorious face that that very passion gave them.

He learned obedience through suffering, but through it he became a source and source of hope for all who believe in him. At the end of the Mass, there was a very cordial greeting, along with words from Father López Sandoval and a farewell address that made us feel the communion the Church awakens in our hearts. Many expressed the desire for this meeting to be held more frequently.

Tuesday, May 15, 1979.

This morning, a small group of advisors and I analyzed the current situation and the Church's potential role. We prepared a final statement highlighting the potential responsibility of various sectors in creating this difficult situation.

In the afternoon, a press conference was held at the Archbishop's Library. Numerous people attended, perhaps 25 or 30, including journalists and national and international television crews. They were given the statement, which was made public through them.

Wednesday, May 16, 1979.

I had breakfast with Monsignor Urioste and Dr. Chávez, who is a key figure in the dialogue we have had with members of Anep, the Christian Democrats, and the government, a dialogue in which the Church has participated. He informed me of all the outreach activities he has undertaken in recent months, opening many avenues of hope for mutual understanding. Above all, in the search for a solution that involves greater participation by all the country's active stakeholders in the pursuit of the common good.

I immediately wrote the article I'll send to La Prensa, which talks about my return from Rome and my hope in God, despite seemingly insurmountable difficulties. I immediately took a few hours' rest at the estate of the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love.

At four in the afternoon, I had a very interesting meeting at the Archbishop's Palace with the rector of the University of El Salvador and the rector of the José Simeón Cañas Central American University. They were accompanied by senior officials from both universities. I was accompanied by Monsignor Urioste and Father Rafael Moreno.

The meeting was opened by the rector of the University of El Salvador, at whose initiative we had gathered. It focused on the statements made by the two universities and by our Archdiocese regarding the conflict between the government and the Popular Revolutionary Block, seeking ways to collaborate in resolving it.

I told both rectors that I welcomed the Archbishop's appeal for all active members of the country to contribute, according to their abilities and skills, not only to solving the current problem, but also to delving into the root causes of all the problems caused by social injustice in the country.

The discussion continued into the afternoon, and it was agreed to promote the participation of all Archdiocesan guests, especially universities, which mobilize the country's professional and cultural circles. To this end, a roundtable discussion will be held to analyze the Archdiocesan declaration and propose initiatives to find solutions to our socio-political-economic problems.

During the meeting with the sectors, the superior of the Guadalupe nuns arrived to inform the Archbishopric that two Mexican nuns working in Arcatao, in the department of Chalatenango, had been picked up by a red Immigration vehicle and taken to an unknown destination. We attempted to investigate the situation, and late that night, the superior managed to contact the Minister of the Interior, who informed her that Immigration had received numerous complaints against the nuns and had taken them to the Guatemalan border.

Catholic radio broadcast the news, along with the Archbishop's protest, calling this a new form of persecution of the Church and a violation of human rights, as there is no proven crime that led the nuns to leave the country so unexpectedly. For their part, the

nuns, both Guadalupanas and those from other congregations, are contacting their fellow nuns in Guatemala to inquire about the fate of these nuns who arrived so unexpectedly in the neighboring country.

Thursday, May 17, 1979.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Friday, May 18, 1979.

Among this morning's visits, the interview with Spanish Television stands out. A brief conversation focused on the situation and the Church's position regarding this conflict between the State and the Popular Organization (Bpr). The visit also included a visit from the Cuts (Cultural Union of Popular Organization), whose trade union confederation expressed its solidarity with the Archbishop's call for dialogue and expressed its willingness to organize a forum to analyze the situation in the form of a round table. It was a very interesting conversation, especially in terms of understanding how our workers are highly valued and sensitive to political and social issues.

Monsignor Rivera also pleasantly surprised me, and with him we discussed the secret document of a complaint filed against me by the four bishops, in which, before the Holy See, they accuse me of questions of faith, politicization, a pastoral approach based on false theological foundations, and a series of accusations that completely call into question my episcopal ministry.

Despite the gravity of the situation, I felt a great peace. I acknowledge my shortcomings before God, but I believe I acted with good will and far from the serious things I'm accused of. God will have the final say, and I hope to continue working calmly with the same enthusiasm as always, serving the Holy Church with love.

In the afternoon, the French Special Ambassador appears very discouraged, as his efforts to liberate the embassy from the Popular Revolutionary Block's occupation have proved fruitless. The Block persists in demanding that the government release or provide information on three captured comrades, which the government claims it does not possess.

Public opinion, silently, claims they no longer exist. In my appeal, I asked the Block to end these occupations and that everyone now suspects the fate of the missing, and that it is sufficient to have put pressure on the government. Otherwise, the Block is also significantly contributing to the country's unrest, which does not go beyond the scope of its demands.

I conveyed these same thoughts to the Ambassador and expressed the Church's willingness to do everything in its power, but that the only thing I could do in this case was to support him in his sense of helplessness in the face of human whims. He told me of the sad situation of the hostages at the French Embassy, forced even to sleep on the floor. They were being held in the same room; the situation has improved slightly, but it is still a very difficult emergency, and this situation has already lasted two weeks.

The Venezuelan Embassy is also still occupied, but it was occupied a week after the French Embassy. The Cathedral, too, and I pointed this out to the Ambassador, was occupied on the same day as the French Embassy. The Cathedral is a center of the

Blockade. It doesn't bother me, but it makes me feel helpless to save it and dedicate it to worship as it should.

I had a meeting with the seminarians of the Archdiocesan Major Seminary, also attended by the seminary's rector, Father Gregorio Rosa. He was extremely cordial and frank. I took advantage of the conversation and their questions to express my concerns about politicization and also to invite them to work together for the unity of the Church, and to mature in their priestly identity, to which their vocation calls them. It was a meeting that left me completely satisfied, seeing the concerns of the young people and also giving the parish priest the opportunity to offer his guidance, just as he desired, to his priests.

I extended my conversation with Father Rector, taking him to dinner and for a walk, during which he also had a very cordial exchange, not only in his role as Rector and in the Seminary reports, but also as a friend, a friend he has been for so long and so deeply.

That evening, at the Divine Providence Hospital of Dr. Lara Velado, Dr. González de la Crónica and a group of university students met to prepare...

That evening, we met with Dr. Lara Velado González, editor of the newspaper La Crónica, and a group of law students from the university to plan a roundtable discussion on human rights that this group of law students has organized for May 22nd at the National University.

Now it's my turn to develop the topic of rights, from a moral and theological perspective. After planning this roundtable, we had a long conversation, primarily to

discuss the President of the Republic's call for a national dialogue to help find solutions for the country.

Almost everyone expresses pessimism about the lack of credibility of the government's offer of freedom and democratization; however, there are positive opinions about the opportunity to make the most of what we can and to contribute with goodwill to spreading, among all national elements (organizations, professionals, etc.), the light and strength that the country demands of all of us.

Saturday, May 19, 1979.

I spent the entire morning, until about 3:00 PM, visiting part of the parish of Colón, a picturesque spot at the foot of the San Salvador volcano, where Father Nicolás, the parish priest of Colón, along with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, had prepared a group of young people and children to receive Confirmation. The atmosphere upon my arrival struck me as very cold, and I was unable to establish a more cordial relationship with these people, who felt very repressed. It seemed that having to work on a hacienda was, for them, an opportunity to live under the steward's control. I even found him a bit domineering.

I strongly recommended that Father Nicolás visit and encourage these poor people and strive to build alliances with the hacienda people. I arrived with this sadness and also with the intention of never again accepting a celebration within a company or estate, much less accepting the attention the hacienda people offer, leaving the poor in a certain marginalization.

At the time of cenaWe had a meeting with the information team to prepare the report I present weekly in the homily. There was some controversy over the commentary to be given to the President's speech, as it was necessary to demonstrate the Church's good will, despite skepticism regarding promises that must await supporting facts, and not simply believe-as is generally not done-the President's promises in an environment where lies, distortions, and deception prevail. I gathered the opinions of both sides of the meeting and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, prepared the report I am required to present in the Sunday homily.

At night visits by journalists, from seven to nine, and at almost ten years old I had to give an interview to French television, Guatemalan television, and a journalist or reporter from a German magazine. Mother Juanita also came to discover more unison at the Tamanique convent.

He was unable to provide any further details, other than that he had poured gasoline on the doors and started a fire which, thank God, was put out in time.

Sunday, May 20, 1979.

While the Cathedral was still occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block, I had to once again request the hospitality of the Rosary Church to celebrate the eight o'clock Mass, which, thank God, was also well attended. The singing of the Chalatenango minor seminary enlivened the crowd, and everyone joined in.

It was a well-attended Mass. The homily focused on the theme of Easter, which gives us Love, since all the readings speak to us of the God of Love and of Christ's new

commandment: to love one another as He has loved us.I had the opportunity to redefine the Church as a builder of communities in love and this distinguishes it from any other group or movement of a political, social or earthly nature.I have defined, once again, the autonomous position of the Church, which does not identify with any system or movement or political group.

After Mass, the journalists and television crews, who had been very active during the Mass, invited me to a press conference, which I gladly accepted. I remember, among others, a journalist from Le Monde in Paris and two Venezuelan television channels. Afterward, I went to my family in Apopa for a few hours of rest, a very pleasant experience.

That evening, I dined with the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love in a very cordial atmosphere. Upon my return to the residence, I was informed of the situation of the Venezuelan Ambassador, who had fled the Embassy, occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block, and had taken refuge in the Nunciature. I spoke with Father Brito, Chancellor of the Curia, asking him to come on my behalf to verify the Ambassador's needs and, if necessary, to let me know.

Monday, May 21, 1979.

After a brief stint at the diocesan curia, where I served some priests, nuns, and faithful, mainly the Caritas group of Aguilares, who were looking for ways to bring food to distribute in that region, since the Cathedral, where the warehouse is located, was occupied. My response was that we have waited becauseAt that time it was risky to take anything away from the occupied cathedral.

After this brief stay in the Curia, I went to Chalatenango, at the invitation of the Episcopal Vicar, Father Fabián Amaya, to meet with the nuns who work in the pastoral care of that dicastery, to express solidarity with the Guadalupe nuns who suffered the temporary exile of two nuns from Arcatao, deported to Guatemala.

They will return today or tomorrow, and in the meantime, this meeting evaluated the nuns' work and focused on the extremely complicated political situation our country is experiencing. This afternoon, when the plane arrived from Guatemala, the expected Guadalupe nuns did not arrive. We will expect them tomorrow.

Father Gregorio Rosa was with me this evening, and we had a very in-depth conversation about the bishops' denunciation and the reality of our Archdiocese. This is a moment of truth, Father Goyo believes, and we must seize this moment to reaffirm the Church's position and remove all obstacles that impede a more authentic pastoral ministry.

The accusations made in this document contain some truth, which must be corrected, but they also contain much exaggeration and are almost slanderous. We will respond to these accusations with facts, continuing to work on the pastoral care of our Archdiocese.

Tuesday, May 22, 1979.

Father Chus Delgado came to breakfast with me and updated me on the progress of the talks with Anep, the Christian Democrats, and the government. According to Father

Chus, there doesn't seem to be any progress due to the group's lack of sincerity and intense interest. Nevertheless, I expressed my opinion that I needed to continue to be present so as not to demonstrate hostility from the Church.

I didn't go to the Curia because I was busy preparing my speech at the University this afternoon. At five o'clock this afternoon, I participated in a roundtable discussion at the National University, along with Dr. Lara Velado, director of La Crónica del Pueblo, a worker, and a peasant woman. We discussed human rights. My approach was theological and moral. The law classroom was completely packed, so much so that even the aisles were full, and upon my arrival I received a warm welcome. I thanked the Lord for having been able to bring the message of his name to this Assembly.

Finally, the public was informed that a new massacre was underway at the Venezuelan Embassy. The hostages, the Ambassador, and other embassy employees had already left, and a demonstration from the Venezuelan Nationalist Block was moving toward the embassy to support the remaining occupants inside. Security forces opened fire, reporting at least six deaths and many injuries. During the roundtable discussion, various journalists, including television journalists. A Mexican journalist followed me to Divine Providence Hospital for an interview. He was from the Mexican newspaper Uno más Uno.

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart arrived to ask what they could do about the massacre at the Venezuelan Embassy, very close to the Sacred Heart School. We contacted the Red Cross to ask for information so we could be of assistance, but the Red Cross said they couldn't get close enough because the security forces wouldn't let them.

Colegio Guadalupano informed me that the two nuns who had been taken to Guatemala had arrived. Both spoke to me on the phone, very excited and grateful to be back in their homeland.

I promised to go to lunch with them tomorrow.

Wednesday, May 23, 1979.

I had a consultation breakfast with the usual priests and lay people. The main topics were the evaluation of the dialogue that Anep and the Christian Democrats had conducted, to which the Church had been invited.

He also recently participated in representation fromGovernment. The question is whether it's worth continuing, whether something will be gained from it. We concluded that it was always appropriate to participate and seize the opportunity to shed light on our situation from the Church; another question concerned the National Forum convened by the President.

The general consensus was that it was necessary to wait for greater credibility to avoid being manipulated by political interests. And a third point concerns the relationship between the Church and the Popular Revolutionary Block, which has shown scant attention in the current conflict with the government, seizing control of churches and denouncing the Archbishop.

It was said that relations should not be interrupted, even if there were difficult moments in the defense of the people's rights, and that it was necessary to wait to decide

on these relations, which had always been expressed in the autonomy of the two entities, the Church and the Block.

On the occasion of the National Forum convened by the President, Dr. GuillermoSieveand another member of the Christian Democrats attended an audience to speak with the Church and reach an agreement on whether to participate or not at the National Forum. Although I expressed my gratitude and goodwill, it became clear that we couldn't present it as a joint effort, as if the Church were… a partner to a political party.

During this meeting, we received the tragic news of the assassination of Dr. Rebollo, Minister of Education. It seemed to me like revenge for the killing of the fourteen protesters killed yesterday by police and the National Guard near the Venezuelan Embassy.

I interviewed the Spanish journalist, who expressed his point of view and his sadness for our press, given that he witnessed yesterday's events near the Venezuelan embassy and is reading in our press today information imposed by the capital and the government.

I went to lunch at the Guadalupano School to speak with the two nuns who had already returned from Guatemala, where they had been sent by immigration authorities. Thank God, they have managed to overcome this period of slander and abuse and are willing to work with the same love in the remote town of Chalatenango.

This afternoon, I prepared a statement with Father Moreno regarding the death of the protesters and the assassination of Dr. Rebollo, to express my solidarity with the suffering of so many families, my prayers for the deceased, and an appeal to the

government and the Block to stop obsessing over their conflicts. I also appealed to those who can intercede for a swift resolution to this situation, as it is costing many lives and causing great suffering to our people.

During the day, a ministerial meeting was held at the Presidential Palace, given the gravity of the situation, as well as a meeting of the National Assembly, which led to the decree of a state of siege.A 30 days.

With Monsignor Urioste, we prepared the dialogue that will be broadcast on the radio. This time, we dedicated it to commenting on the current conflict between the Government and the Popular Revolutionary Block, expressing the Church's well-known views. I urged both sides to quickly return to harmony. I also mentioned the university roundtable and Seminary Day, along with the confirmations for young people, which will be held on June 3rd, Pentecost. I concluded by reading the appeal on the tragic events of yesterday and today.

Thursday, May 24, 1979.

This day is marked by turmoil due to the violent situation in the country, coupled with the state of siege. However, the 14 bodies of those killed by police and National Guard at the Venezuelan Embassy and the Minister of Education, Dr. Carlos Herrera Rebollo, will be buried today.from the 14th in the Cathedral, while seven of them were recovered by their families. A funeral vigil was held in the Cathedral for seven bodies, and this morning they were buried, accompanied by a crowd estimated at between 7,000 and 10,000 people. The Cathedral's occupants took advantage of this gathering for they're

leaving to leave the Cathedral after three weeks of occupation. Thankfully, there were no incidents to report during the burial of yesterday's victims.

Dr. Rebollo's burial took place in the afternoon. His body was interred in a shared house.He was a simple man.He loved people very much and that is why he wanted to be with the poor in his last moments.

My appeal to commit ourselves to ending this conflict has appeared in the newspapers, saying that this is not the time to demonstrate who is stronger, who wins, but who is more humane and capable of giving in and forgiving, so as to continue lamenting the tragedies in various circles of the country.

I interviewed four major seminarians who participated in the May Day demonstration. They justified their presence as a show of solidarity with the workers and farmers, the human class to which they belong. Frankly, I saw no mistake. I simply pointed out to them that, given the circumstances of the country and, above all, those of the Church, the Seminary, and our Archdiocese, it would be prudent to always seek advice from those who can best guide.

In particular, I encouraged them to maintain constant dialogue with their bishop. And to understand their concerns without diminishing their nobility, but rather by calling them to express them so that they may be effective witnesses serving the legitimate needs of the people. This, as a priest, or as someone called to the priesthood, cannot be done without a fully evangelical spirit.

This evening, a new wave of violence erupted in the San José de la Montaña area, where the parish priest, Father Víctor Guevara, was surrounded by a police cordon

guarding the area. Father Pedraz, the radio operator, was also forced out of his car on his way to the Divine Providence Hospital and ordered to return. The surveillance in this area appears to have been aimed at the Block's attempt to occupy the Mexican embassy, which, along with the Panamanian embassy, was apparently their next target for occupation, but security forces prevented them from completing their mission.

In an accounting office near Plaza Libertad, accountant Montoya was murdered as he was leaving his office. I don't remember his exact name, but he worked with our cooperatives on accounting for the construction of the Cathedral and for the Interdiocesan Social Secretariat. We don't know the motive or who killed him.

On the other hand, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, today, May 24, was celebrated with great fervor, especially in the church that bears her name, run by the Salesian Fathers, and in the schools and other works of the Sons of Don Bosco.

Friday, May 25, 1979.

We have dedicated this entire morning to a Senate meeting to assess the situation of the Diocese in this very challenging context for the country. We are also working with organized groups, especially the government, to reach conclusions on what our priestly and ecclesial stance should be. In this regard, the next clergy meeting has also been prepared. It will begin by presenting the events that have shaken the country this month of May, the Church's stance, and asking each priest to express with full confidence and freedom his feelings, thoughts, and opinions regarding the attitude of priests and the Church in general.

Everything will be illuminated by the light of Church documents and will conclude with a summary of the practical conclusions prepared, presented as the fruit of the Archbishop's entire reflection. I was very pleased with the sincerity and interest.which has been shown to act as a true Church that avoids confusion and ambiguity in a critical context like the one we are experiencing.

The Senate regulations were also revised, and some amendments were proposed for consultation with the clergy. A document read by Monsignor Álvarez during the clergy meeting in his diocese of San Miguel was also made public, denouncing the attitude of the Archbishop and the Archdiocese. For my part, I told them that we took advantage of those criticisms to review our performance with sincerity and humility.

In the afternoon, the rector of the Central American University, José Simeón Cañas, paid a visit. He expressed his sincere love for his country and expressed concern over the universities' absence from the Forum organized by the President of the Republic, citing a lack of trust and credibility. Therefore, it is believed that participation is how to legitimize attitudes which have caused so much pain to the country. And this would be tolerating these injustices, as well as attitudes that claim to be democratic, but which, in reality, deny the freedom that true democracy demands.

I told him that some absences are painful, but necessary, and that his absence from this Forum, under these circumstances, was not a denial of the goodwill of those who sincerely want to work, but rather a request for an appropriate environment in which to collaborate with good will.

The Panamanian Chargé d'Affaires also visited me to ask me to intervene with the BPR Negotiating Commission to offer asylum on behalf of his government to those

occupying the Venezuelan and French embassies. He stated that the necessary arrangements had also been made with the Salvadoran Ministry of Foreign Affairs to allow them to leave for that country. Since the Block's occupiers refuse this asylum intervention, they ask me to persuade them, for their own good, because if they do not seek asylum in Panama, they will face trial for the crimes of occupation and hostage-taking by both occupied embassies.

I searched until late last night for a way to get this letter from the Panamanian Embassy to the Blockade Negotiating Commission, but I couldn't find a contact. This will happen tomorrow morning, God willing.

Saturday, May 26, 1979.

At the Institute of the Somascan Sisters, I met with the social communications consultants to brief them and prepare the informative portion of the homily, including their respective assessments. This weekly study is very interesting because it gives us insight into the reality of our country. This time, we primarily analyzed the ongoing acts of violence that have caused numerous deaths and injuries, the occupation of the Venezuelan and French embassies, the state of siege declared since May 24, and the National Forum to which the President of the Republic invited the people, to which many responded with skepticism and non-participation.

On behalf of the Church, the Episcopal Conference was invited, and the bishops elected Monsignor Revelo and Monsignor Freddy Delgado as representatives. For my part, I expressed that I was not opposed to dialogue, but that I would have hoped for a basis of trust based on facts, with the government returning to respect the precepts of the

Constitution, which have been so violated and, therefore, there is no credibility in its sincerity in seeking dialogue. I suggested to the Conference that it should not be the bishops, but others.what it will represent.

I then interviewed a journalist from the Mexican newspaper Uno Más Uno, who seemed very concerned about the situation in El Salvador. I also interviewed the Guadalupe nuns, the school superior, and the two nuns expelled to Guatemala and later repatriated. The Minister called them back for their work, which, he claimed, was not religious. The nuns asked for facts and concrete evidence, but received none.

We listened to it together with Father Fabián Amaya and encouraged them to continue their work, always based on truth and true evangelization, because they are doing so much good in the remote village of Arcatao. But during the state of siege, it is best to avoid any demonstration that might provoke an unpleasant reaction from the government.

Father Brito and Bachelor Cuéllar were responsible for delivering the Panamanian embassy's note offering asylum to the occupants of the Venezuelan and French embassies. They promised, according to what Father Brito told me, to consider the matter.

Sunday, May 27, 1979.

Thank God, the Cathedral was evacuated and we were able to celebrate our 8:00 a.m. Mass there, but unfortunately, Radio Ysax has not yet been repaired, and the Mass could not be broadcast. It was clearly well received, as there were many questions about it.

It was Ascension Sunday, and I was preaching about transcendence, about how our mission and vocation as a Church and as Christians is always to work in this world, but with a transcendent intention. There were many journalists at the Mass, and television photographs were also taken. I wasn't able to identify all the journalists, but I believe some were from Europe, Mexico, and other countries.

The Panamanian chargé d'affaires has asked for the Church's cooperation, as a special commission has arrived from Panama to address the issue of asylum for the occupants of the Venezuelan and French embassies.

I entrusted this service to Father Brito.

In the evening, I interviewed a journalist from the newspaper Up (Church and National Affairs).

Monday, May 28, 1979.

Today I finished the letter I will send to Cardinal Baggio, with a copy to the Secretariat of State, regarding Monsignor Quarracino's proposal to appoint an apostolic administrator, sede plena.

I have expressed that such a solution not only seems ineffective to me, but also very damaging to the Archdiocese, because it would ultimately disrupt unity and express a dual situation for our archdiocesan community; that it is not simply a matter of resolving personal problems but is an expression of the entire people of God, the voice of

the bishop, which must be neutralized by entrusting him with an apostolic administrator. Anyone could understand that this is a sign of distrust towards the bishop himself.

I have suggested, as a more fundamental solution, the appointment of new bishops, following the criteria of the Second Vatican Council, to inject new pastoral criteria into the Episcopal Conference, thus avoiding a disunity that has no reason to exist, since it goes against the principles of the Council.

I received a visit from three representatives of French human rights organizations, who came to investigate the human rights situation in our country.

I had lunch with Fathers Ellacuría and Sobrino to talk about the project of a forthcoming pastoral letter on the situation of the country and on the mission of the Church, which I hope will be published on next August 6th.

We will meet in eight days to finalize the plan, which should be ready by then.

I went to the press office to check on the situation at the radio station, which is still offline, while many are anxious for a solution to this situation. It seems something is missing, something they've been sent to bring to the United States, and it should arrive any moment now. But I begged the Father in charge to hurry things along and, if necessary, have someone personally go and bring those spare parts to the United States.

I also learned that they captured and tortured a young man who works at the Criterio printing house, where our weekly Orientación is published, and that during the interrogation, many questions emerged that reveal the government's persecutory mentality toward our media.

At night I wanted to avoid the Christianity Course ultreya, but there were...

CHAPTER 15.

Year 1979.

Diary from May 29th to June 19th.

1979.

Tuesday, May 29, 1979.

At breakfast, I had an interesting conversation with Father César Jerez, Provincial of the Jesuits, recently returned from a trip to South America. He told me of his interest in following the pastoral ministry of our Archdiocese and how it has incorporated various expressions of our episcopal teaching.

It's interesting to hear the impressions of Churches and episcopal conferences as powerful as Brazil's, compared to our small size; it broadens the spirit and sees how this voice and approach of the Church, identifying with the people and confronting, even out of necessity, governments that don't understand the people, and the need to choose, as Puebla recommends, for the poor, is an accepted fact and is making great progress in a Church that authentically seeks to be the Church of Jesus Christ.

The entire morning was dedicated to the meeting of the nascent Pastoral Council; it was very comforting to take stock of the situation, acknowledge the shortcomings we still face, and enthusiastically propose suggestions to transform the work of this Council into a true pastoral force for coordinating and guiding the pastoral care of the entire Archdiocese.

During the meeting, I was able to take a few breaks to speak with a seminarian from Chalatenango. And, most importantly, with a printing press employee who was tortured and asked rather malicious questions by the Archdiocese. And with Father Martel from Apopa, who is giving me bad news about a young man we are monitoring to see if he truly has a vocation. Based on our conversation, unfortunately, we must now rule out any possibility of his continuing his studies in the seminary.

In the afternoon, an interview with a journalist from UP (United Left) and another with several magazines from South and North America. All the journalists are interested in knowing the Church's thinking and its relationship with the government. I try to be extremely clear and honest, also denouncing the manipulations sometimes evident in advertising in our environment.

I am finalizing the letter to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, which will soon contain my opinion on the proposal for an apostolic administrator, sede plena, and on possible ways to resolve our ecclesial conflict.

Wednesday, May 30, 1979.

It was another busy day. We woke to the news of the assassination of the Chargé d'Affaires, with the rank of Swiss Ambassador, in Plaza Alegre, Paseo Escalón. He was attacked on his way to the Embassy and killed by machine gun fire. The secretary of the Nunciature wanted to speak with me.

I promised to go to the Nunciature to be more reassured, but I can't because this area, close to the assassination, is blocked by security checks. The secretary of the Nunciature came to the Archbishop's residence to inform me confidentially that France has asked the Holy See to intervene to resolve the problem of the Embassy in El Salvador, occupied by the Revolutionary Popular Block. The Ambassador and other collaborators are being held hostage, their human condition extremely precarious and having lasted more than 25 days.

A few ideas came to mind, and I liked the suggestion because, as a pastor, I will take this opportunity to speak about the crime that just occurred and other attacks on the freedom and dignity of ambassadors and citizens of other countries.

A commission composed of two French lawyers, Father Maurice Bart, also went to the Archbishop's residence, coming on behalf of several French organizations to express their solidarity.of our Churchand gather information about our situation. We spoke at length, and they gave me great strength with their appreciation for our understanding of the situation. For my part, I also thanked them and asked them not to abandon us, continuing to provide us with the moral support they have given me today.

This afternoon, a meeting was held with those responsible for social communications and Father Pedraz, the radio director, to analyze the situation of our station. From a technical standpoint, we hope the current difficulty preventing

broadcasting will soon be overcome. We also examined the ideological aspects in depth, and a committee composed of Father Pedraz, Father Fabián Amaya, Doris Osegueda, Father José Luis Burget, and Father Gregorio Rosa was formed to oversee the content of our broadcasts.

They were all present. I took the opportunity to consult with them on the statement suggested by the Nunciature, which I also wish to make as a pastoral statement. They suggested several ideas, and Father Gregorio will accompany me in completing the drafting of this document.

So, after dinner, he arrived at the Divine Providence Hospital, where we work late into the night. For this reason, I had to decline the invitation the Christian Cursillists had extended to me for dinner, which would also have been helpful for many matters related to the lay ministry. However, I apologized and promised to see him again very soon.

Thursday, May 31, 1979.

Father Gregorio Rosa and I woke up after finishing our work. After a night's rest, our minds felt fresher, and we managed to finish it around 10:00. I invited the secretary of the Nunciature and the officials of the French Embassy to show them the draft. The secretary of the Nunciature made several comments and almost suspected that the French might not like it very much because it wasn't good. It was a good idea to dedicate ourselves almost exclusively to them.

I warned him that this was a pastoral appeal and that it could not be biased only towards the French, but rather take advantage of the fact that the Swiss ambassador had

also been assassinated to address all the issues of diplomats and foreign citizens, towards whom the Church also had a pastoral duty.

After further private discussions with the Secretary of the Nunciature, the French representatives arrived, to whom I read the draft statement, expressing complete satisfaction. They simply asked me if I could emphasize that the Ambassador and his staff, including a 70-year-old woman, had been held captive in the Embassy for 28 days, in extremely inhumane physical and hygienic conditions. I gladly accepted this amendment, and the statement was made public, just as we had prepared it.

I would like to add a comment from the Secretariat of the Nunciature regarding the emphasis placed on the request to the Government to intervene in the French Embassy affair, but always with absolute respect for the human lives involved in this occupation.

The first impressions this afternoon of the pronunciation that has begun to spread have been very flattering.

In the afternoon, I experienced a profound moment of pastoral respite when I accepted Father Cayo Ayala's invitation to celebrate his sixtieth wedding anniversary in San José Villanueva, his hometown. His parents, Father Francisco Ayala and Doña Herminia, coincided with the end of May. And May flowers arrived at the town church from the various sections of the parish served by the Passionist Sisters.

A beautiful ensemble for a pastoral afternoon, which spoke of the Virgin Mary, the sanctity of marriage and fidelity, the gift of life and holy fruitfulness. These themes were presented in a simple atmosphere, where many children had also arrived from school, and the entire congregation was present. A theme with simple pastoral language and a

greeting, as we greet each other by shaking hands, leaves a deep, affectionate sense of peace in the soul, with a people who know how to respond.

Friday, June 1, 1979.

At the Curia, I had coffee with Fathers George, Trinidad Nieto, and Modesto Villarán, from Soyapango. This was the main conversation, as yesterday he was slandered in the newspapers, claiming that the people of Soyapango should have asked for his transfer to another post because he is a priest who offends the people of the market surrounding the church. This is completely false, given the priest and the sympathy he enjoys among the people.

He encouraged him to continue. He, too, was greatly encouraged because these slanders, more than anything else, only served to further strengthen the pastors' courage. I told him how I, too, had received phone calls with death threats and a note with the White Warrior Union (UGB) swastika.ordering me to DevoI have to change my way of preaching, I have to condemn communism, I have to praise the fallen members of the security forces, etc., and if I don't follow this line, they will eliminate me.

Which I understand as psychological threats, to silence a voice that is heard in the conscience and that cannot be silenced, to shed light on so much confusion and illegitimate interests.

At ten o'clock in the morning, I had scheduled a visit from the U.S. Ambassador, accompanied by the new Secretary of the Embassy, the head of political affairs, and the representative of international aid for Latin America. He respectfully expressed his

admiration for our Church, and we touched on several topics where these relations between the U.S. Embassy and the Archbishop can bring great benefits to our country.

A representative of the medical students was also present. Two young men, deeply dedicated to their profession and about to graduate, expressed their astonishment at the appalling medical situation in health centers when it comes to the origin of life. So many mutilations! So many sterilizations of men and women, performed so easily and on such a large scale! It was an expression these young men used when they told me: "Our people's fertility is being emasculated, and something must be done." And they suggested I organize a roundtable discussion at the university on this topic and participate in it.

I gladly accepted and congratulated them, and asked God to preserve them. Always keep a clear mind, so that you may be true doctors who defend life and not destroy it. We agreed that on June 11th, close to Medical Students' Day, this Forum will be held, together with other medical and economic professionals, to study this violation of the fundamental right to life.

I also received a visit from two workers who invited me, or asked me to send a representative, to a meeting to unify workers' ideals that will be held tomorrow. I gladly agreed to send at least one representative, since my time is occupied with a meeting of nuns.

There was also a visit from a Japanese journalist; I had to use an interpreter because he doesn't speak Spanish and I don't speak English. The visit also clarified the Archdiocese's position on the country's current political situation.

In the afternoon, a telephone interview with a Colombian journalist, on the occupation of the Cathedral by the Fapu, which resumed it the day before yesterday but promised to hand it over tomorrow, a Saturday.

I spoke about it with Father Moreno and with the Engineer Ricardo Navarro, of the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador, came to see me on behalf of the Fapu (Unified Popular Action Front) to explain the reason for the occupation: to draw attention to the violent death of one of their colleagues. I used this opportunity to convince him to intercede with the Fapu (Unified Popular Action Front) to return the Cathedral to us by Sunday. He stated that there was no resentment toward the Church, but that they were simply using this means to make their voices heard and that they apologized.

Today, on the first of the month, we held a meeting for the Holy Hour, which, thank God, is regaining importance, both in terms of the number of people attending and, above all, the quality of the prayer we offer, responding to the many needs of the Church and the nation. My brother Gaspar, who holds an important position at Antel, was unexpectedly demoted. This is undoubtedly the government's revenge, because he is my relative, and I feel my family is suffering the consequences of a prophetic duty I must fulfill.

I tried to encourage him and tell him that in every situation we must always remain strong in hope and steadfast in the fight for justice for our people; even though it is difficult for people without much religious and Christian training to understand the current role of the Church, which is very difficult if they want to be faithful to the Gospel.

Saturday, June 2, 1979.

We had a breakfast discussion ahead of the homily. We discussed at length the topic of faith and politics.

The need for a specific pastoral ministry to address the concerns of some prominent Christians, principles and reflections that cannot be addressed in a mass pastoral ministry. Meanwhile, we must do everything possible to ensure that those who have organized themselves in grassroots political organizations do not lose the faith that perhaps inspired their political involvement. Due to the lack of qualified guidance from the Church, they could lose that faith and be led by misguided solutions.

Starting at 9:00 a.m., we held a meeting with the religious superiors to discuss the case of the nuns expelled from Arcatao. The expulsion was rectified by the government itself, allowing the nuns to return, although permission from the Superior General is pending. The story of one of the nuns was deeply moving, especially regarding the spirit of dedication she demonstrates in continuing her work in an environment to which she feels deeply committed. She believes their absence would be harmful and would undermine the progress made in these reflections.

Sisters from other congregations have expressed their solidarity with these exemplary sisters, and I have invited them to frequently engage in these reflections and evaluations, which will further identify us with the pastoral work of the Archdiocese, which does not seek to impose, but rather to engage in dialogue so that we can all, with conviction, walk where the Lord wants us to walk.

I had lunch with the community of the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love, as it is with great sadness that they must bid farewell to their current superior, Mother Carmen María Scaglietti, who has decided to leave religious life and return to Costa Rica, her homeland. I saw all the sisters deeply grieving and tried to offer them encouragement with an ecclesial spirit. I also encouraged Mother Carmen, so that, even though she is no longer a nun, she may always be a faithful servant of the Church.

Sunday, June 3, 1979.

The lack of Radio Ysax meant that more people flocked to the Cathedral for the 8:00 a.m. Mass. Furthermore, a large group of young people and children about to receive Confirmation on this day of Pentecost, accompanied by their families, godparents, and the congregation, attended this extremely solemn Mass. English radio and television stations, including the BBC in London, were present to gather their impressions of this liturgy. They were present throughout the Mass and especially afterward, when they asked me questions about my opinion on how a peaceful solution to the situation in the country could be found and my thoughts on violent solutions.

The answers were inspired by what I have always preached: that the best peaceful solution is a return to love and a sincere desire to seek dialogue, but in a climate of trust that must be demonstrated by facts, so that people can freely express their opinions and everyone is admitted to the dialogue that seeks that solution. As for violence, I exposed the principles I have already written in my pastoral letter.

Monday, June 4, 1979.

After Mass, at the Divine Providence Hospital, two representatives of the FAPU were waiting for me to propose an interview and that I will indicate the date. I told them that I would like to consult, which I did during the day and offered them next Thursday at six o'clock in the evening. Also representatives of nefarious I amThey came to ask me to hold a Mass for the girl who was shot dead in La Reubicación, Chalatenango, a Mass she had proposed for next Wednesday at noon in the Cathedral.

I told her I had already been asked to celebrate a Mass for that same person and that I would celebrate it in the Chapel of Divine Providence. She wasn't happy because she said it was necessary to do it in public to denounce the crime committed. I told her the main purpose of the Mass was to pray for the deceased and that the Church had already made the accusations very clear.

This morning I attended the vicariate meeting held by the parish priests of the Flor Blanca Vicariate in Asunción. I presented my project to prepare a pastoral ministry for the metropolitan area and asked for their collaboration, given that they are located right in the city, in its most prestigious area. It was very pleasant to receive such positive feedback on the need for better service in this capital.

I also raised the issue of the parish priest of San José de la Montaña and how he intends to withdraw from the Republic. I take this opportunity to ask the vicariate, which is proposing a solution, Father Carlos Mejía, current parish priest of La Asunción de Flor Blanca, or Father Ernesto Abrego, parish priest of San Benito, so that San José can share the same spirit as the other parish priests in the vicariate.

A goal TheThe main purpose of my visit to this meeting was to offer encouragement, as I'd heard there was a certain lack of enthusiasm among some, and I expressed my satisfaction with the way they'd organized themselves and the team spirit they'd brought to all their parish work. I congratulated them and encouraged them to continue.

At the Curia, I received a visit from Father Jorge Benavides, parish priest of Suchitoto, who presented very interesting topics regarding the political divisions and other aspects of that charming town. Also present were Father Cazares of Tonacatepeque and Father Julio Orellana of Cuscatancingo.

In the afternoon, another mass was celebrated in the same hospital chapel for Professor P. Ramos, who was murdered on April 24 after being tortured. His wife, three children, and mother were present, along with other family members and numerous teachers from various schools. The homily was based on the words of St. Paul: "Through one man, death entered the world," affirming that our entire situation is like a triumph of sin, the sin that expresses itself above all in the death of others, in the killing of others.

But Christ was the beginning of a justice on which we must base all just demands, without resorting to violence and hatred.

A journalist from San Juan, Puerto Rico, visited me. He had some difficulty speaking Spanish, as he speaks English. We had a very interesting conversation about the situation in our country. As he greeted me, he complimented me, saying it had been a wonderful experience for him to speak with me. I thank the Lord for having given me this

personality, which I don't want to exploit for my own vanity, but for a better service to this Church.

The Archbishopric has prepared a wealth of material for the clergy meeting that will be held tomorrow, God willing.

Tuesday, June 5, 1979.

This morning was dedicated to the monthly clergy meeting. Numerous priests from all the vicariates attended, as well as the nuns who work in the villages providing direct pastoral care for the archdiocese. Father Fabián Amaya coordinated the meeting, which was prepared by Fathers Benito Tovar and Trinidad Nieto. The meeting focused on analyzing the events of May, so intense, so bloody, and so complicated.

After an account of the events prepared by the Secretariat for Information and read by Father Nieto, Father Jesús Delgado focused on the theological principles of Puebla, in the exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi, and the Second Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of San Salvador, from which criteria and ideas can be drawn to illuminate and reflect on this reality.

All this information and insights were then integrated with some contributions in the plenary session. After refreshments, we divided into groups and returned to the plenary session, where we gathered interesting observations and suggestions for a pastoral approach that increasingly identifies us as a Church and allows us to discern perfectly between the various political and advocacy lines in circulation. So that, based

on our identity as a Church, we may be what Christ intended when he placed his Church, enlightened by his word, at the service of the world.

The last speech was mine, and I tried to congratulate him on the richness he had contributed and to give value to all that reflection, and to summarize it all as a slogan in these words: "Clarification, identity of the Church, priestly unity (presenting the mystery of our presbyterate as the nucleus and center from which the Church's activity is illuminated), and discernment (so that the Holy Spirit may give us the ability not to confuse the Church with other lines, and to be authentically Church, knowing how to understand all the others starting from our identity)."

The meeting was characterized by great cordiality and enthusiasm. I have the impression that our clergy is maturing and increasingly aligning themselves with the pastoral ideal of the Archdiocese.

Wednesday, June 6, 1979.

This morning, I had an interview with journalists. A newspaper dedicated to exposing abuses and human rights violations is touring El Salvador and has gathered extensive data. It also sought information and the opinion of the Church, which everyone already knows.

A meeting of nuns involved in pastoral ministry was held. It was very lively. Father Chus Delgado gave an overview of the current situation in El Salvador. Although it seemed a bit biased and political, it provided a basis for further discussion.we focusedPastorally, the task is to build an authentic Church, capable of dialogue and of

preserving among us all that God has entrusted to us. Almost all the nuns were present, and they also showed great interest in the case of the nuns of Arcatao, expelled and now returning to their work.

In the afternoon, I celebrated Mass in honor of Mercedes Recinos. She was a worker shot dead in her own home during the repression of that period. She was a union leader and was murdered in her own home, in La Reubicación de Chalatenango. In addition to her family, many fellow workers attended the Mass, including FAPU, a popular political organization that encompasses several labor movements.

I took advantage of the homily to support the justice of their meetings and their union demands, but guiding them to the transcendence, of which the late Mercedes had already spoken to us, that dying fighting for a cause on earth has complete meaning only when the prospects of eternity have not been lost.

And that a Christian must move forward, incorporating into Christ's redemption all the redemptions these groups work for; even though some later understood that I was against these groups and only wanted good Christians. I told them, "Look, you see how difficult it is to make yourself understood, and that's why it's easy to unfairly criticize the Church."

In the evening, a meeting with the ladies who form the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas so that they can expose with absolute freedom and frankness the anomalies and shortcomings they note in the office staff and on the advice of the representative of the Church, Father Rutilio Sánchez.

They were very frank and I agreed to meet with the director and the Father together with a representative of the Archdiocesan Council to try to guide and correct the shortcomings and make Caritas what it should always be, a school at the service of the promotion of charity and love, using the programs that already exist, but not taking form not not only to this, but also to give an example of the charitable work of the Church.

Thursday, June 7, 1979.

Once again, a journalist, Jennie Traf, expressed interest in learning firsthand about the Archbishop's thinking and the Archdiocese's pastoral work. I also provided assistance to a Belgian nun who works in Cojutepeque and will help me organize the Curia's Pastoral Office and the newspaper archive.

Together with the Vicariate of Aguilares, the coordination team, composed of priests and nuns, studied the case of Ciudad Arce, where Father Joaquín Brizuela and the nun represent two opposing pastoral movements. Much effort has been made to organize and coordinate, but it seems there is no choice but to eliminate both and create a more unifying element. Indeed, Mother Josefina has arrived, to whom we have frankly explained the situation, and she is ready to leave.

Father Martel will be responsible for informing and convincing Father Joaquín of the benefits, for the good of the Church, of changing parishes, and for him to express his preferences for this transfer. We have also studied other cases in the vicariate, such as Quezaltepeque, Guazapa, and Opico. I was pleased to see the desire to resolve the problems at the ecclesial level.

In the afternoon, a group of catechists from the Ricaldone Oratory attended a meeting. Unfortunately, since it wasn't confirmed, I couldn't attend. However, I asked Father Brito to discuss what I wanted to say to them: to see how the Salesian oratory system is expanding throughout the Archdiocese, but embodied in the concerns of our pastoral ministry.

Starting at 5:00 PM, at Divine Providence Hospital, with representatives of the Unified Popular Action Front (Fapu) and, on our behalf, with Beto Cuéllar, Father Moreno, and Doris Osegueda, to discuss several points of disagreement between the Church and this organization. Specifically, the occupation of churches, the relationship between your group and our basic ecclesial communities, and your criticisms of the Church's pastoral policies.

And the conversation was interesting because it also resolved the Church's attention towards certain political movements, although the Church, it is notA political expert, but she may participate as a guest, always respecting the autonomy and responsibility of lay people, political parties, and organizations in this matter. However, as the Church, she always has a say in upholding what is right or condemning what is unjust.

Friday, June 8, 1979.

I had a meeting with the board of directors of the Federation of Catholic Schools, in which they expressed their concern about the election of the new board, as the time is approaching and they are having difficulties with the representative of the Episcopal Conference, Monsignor Aparicio.

I suggested to them that the procedure with freedom and which also include elements that are favored by the federation, chosen from other dioceses, which there are certainly elements, such as some Marist brothers, Brother Izquierdo (this one is in San Miguel) and some nuns from La Asunción, in Santa Ana, and who have not given up in their effort to promote the Schools through true pastoral care.

I also implored them to take an active role in encouraging parish schools to participate in the federation. There are outreach and pastoral projects within the federation that are worth pursuing as a federation of Catholic schools.

At lunch with the Provincial of the Jesuit Fathers and three others from the same group, I asked their advice on the current situation. They were very explicit and honest in sharing their opinions; furthermore, they asked me to prepare a future pastoral letter based on a survey conducted among all parish priests and communities, which would serve as a vote, reflecting the opinion of the Archdiocesan Church at the National Forum. The vote proved highly biased, but the Church feels compelled to express its opinion, within its sphere of competence, for the public good in this current situation in the country.

We already have a draft and are waiting for community feedback to incorporate it into the final draft.

This afternoon we had an evaluation of the Curia's organizational work. Father Ibáñez and other collaborators from the Foundation for Minimum Housing are assisting us. Although this is a small step, they told us that we are already seeing progress in the

organization of the Curia, which we aim to improve the functioning of the ecclesial institution in our Archdiocese.

One of the most useful conditions was that the main officials of the Curia and the Diocese will meet every Tuesday at eight in the morning, with the presence of a lay person from Minimum Housing, who will give us his opinion from the outside.

Subsequently, with the Foundation's own staff and with Father Pedraz, the radio director, we discussed the situation of our station and the need to install new equipment, which would cost one hundred thousand colones to install the new antenna. I asked Engineer Galván to send a cable or telex on my behalf to the Misereor institution, which has already helped us greatly. We will ask them for further assistance with this installation. We don't know if the old equipment, currently suspended due to a spare part being unavailable, will be repaired, and we urgently need a radio that expresses the Church's thinking.

Saturday, June 9, 1979.

Like every Saturday, we held a consultation breakfast to prepare the homily notes. It was a very interesting meeting because it evaluated the progress of the Social Information Secretariat. We criticized the new Orientation process, requesting that some very pious notes be discontinued and that more useful information or criteria be provided at a time when our newspaper is the only voice, given that the radio cannot be broadcast.

It was agreed that Ms. Doris Osegueda, head of the Orientation Department, would seek advice from those who might be a bit aggressive, although it would be appropriate to

moderate this. However, it's always good to have someone to encourage us in this direction. As usual, I spent the rest of Saturday preparing the Sunday homily and other spiritual and personal matters.

Sunday, June 10, 1979.

Thank God, Mass at the cathedral is always very well attended, especially during this period when our radio is no longer working and many people come to listen to what they used to hear on the radio.

It's Trinity Sunday, and I took the opportunity to present in my homily the idea of the God of our Fathers, as presented to us in the Old Testament in the first reading: "A God who accompanies the people in their history." From there, I applied it to our history, applying it concretely to our week, inviting the people to always have that faith of Israel in the God who accompanied them even in the greatest difficulties.

The second thought was "The God of Jesus Christ," the revelation of the Holy Trinity, the love of the Father, a God made present in the man who incarnated him, Jesus Christ: mercy, love, dedication to humanity. And finally, the second reading from Saint Paul, which speaks to us of the sending of the Holy Spirit to bring about within humanity a process that unites us to the Holy Trinity, making us children of God, receiving a Spirit of Love, not of fear or slavery, but of holy freedom and great hope, for we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

At noon, I went to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Sister Ana de Jesús Ovín's religious life with the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart. It was a heartfelt Mass, with

everyone warmly participating. Some young women from a community living in Ciudad Arce also participated in the homily. The celebrant, Sister Ana,'s participation was deeply moving.

The provincial, accepting the invitation I had extended in the homily, said that, with the consent of the superior general, they offered me their full cooperation in the work of spreading devotion to the Heart of Jesus, not only in El Salvador, but also throughout Central America.

Just as I was entrusted with at the recent seminar on devotion to the Heart of Jesus held in Santo Domingo, where I was appointed president of a small committee to spread devotion to the Heart of Jesus in Central America. We agreed to meet soon with the nuns who will dedicate themselves to this work. I believe all this is a gift from the Heart of Jesus, and I hope that, through our humble means, His kingdom may expand and deepen among our Central American Christians.

At night, the parish's patronal feast is also celebrated in the Atlacatl neighborhood, as it is the Parish of Divine Providence, and the feast of the Most Holy Trinity is celebrated. The Redemptorist Fathers, who are responsible for this parish, are celebrating with me.

The church was completely packed; upon my arrival, there was warm applause and a sermon on the meaning of Divine Providence, which does not exempt us from the intelligent and generous collaboration of humanity. He also spoke of how the parish, in the designs of Divine Providence, is an instrument that must be used for sanctification, since the purpose of God's Providence for humanity is to make them his children, his

heirs, to share his life with them, which is precisely the parish work in which we must collaborate so that we all live in God's grace.

Monday, June 11, 1979.

I received a visit from a representative of the fourth graduating class of the Usulután Technological Institute, who came to present me with my degree and ask permission to name it after me. I thanked them profusely and told them I had no problem, that on the contrary, it was a great honor and a great satisfaction. I simply informed them that I would need the bishop of that diocese, Monsignor Rivera, to attend the graduation ceremony and asked him to let me know when it would be held.

I spent the rest of the day preparing my presentation for the National University roundtable, held this afternoon at five o'clock, dedicated to the topic of birth control. A doctor from the Demographic Society, an economist, and a social medicine physician participated in the roundtable. With me were Father Guillermo Gibbons, director of the San Lucas Center in San Miguel, which provides counseling on natural methods of conception, and Mrs. Reyes, director of the Center for Population and Family, another institution of our Archdiocese that provides counseling to our families.

I have expounded the doctrine of Paul VI's Humanae Vitae, emphasizing human rights, human dignity, respect for life-that is, all the positive aspects of the Encyclical, which seem to have made a great impression-in order to deduce from it the moral laws that regulate this sacred act of the continuation of human life.

After the speeches, there was an interesting question from the very concerned audience.the diffusionBrazenly using contraceptives. Medical professionals have been very courageous in challenging the Demographic Society's policy and even in demanding, in the name of professional ethics, the freedom and dignity of our people, that we not be so subservient to this policy, which is not the solution to our problem.

I emphasized this in my speech when I argued that the demographic problem must be seen within a broader social framework and that focusing exclusively on birth prevention and, even worse, encouraging abortions, is nothing more than a sinful addition to a complex problem such as our social situation.

Tuesday, June 12, 1979.

We held our first meeting this morning at eight o'clock to conduct a weekly assessment of the Curia's organization. Today, we paid particular attention to the issue of Radio Ysax, which is already a source of great concern for the entire community, and we made several decisions to expedite the resumption of this station, so essential to the Church today.

At ten o'clock in the morning, I attended a meeting in Santa Tecla, to which I had been invited by the leaders of the Salvadoran Communal Union. It was incredibly interesting to discuss social issues with these farmers from different parts of the country. I admired their capacity for autonomy and the respect and hope they place in the Church. I promised them all my support and that I would remain faithful to the motto of our Latin American Church, the preferential option for the poor, keeping in mind the farmers and their efforts to reclaim their dignity.

This morning some priests also came, since Tuesday is the day dedicated to them.

At four in the afternoon I had a meeting with the archdiocesan major seminary, which I greatly appreciated for its attention to the liturgy in the cathedral and its commitment to unity with the minor seminaries, for which a future coexistence was being prepared, and for other aspects that already indicate a certain maturity in this young man preparing to renew the priestly strength of the diocese.

That evening, we had a fascinating conversation with Dr. Castro Salazar, who had been captured and tortured and was deeply outraged by what was possible in our current context. He said, "I thought about putting away my gloves, because I've always been a fighter, even suffering in exile; however, I believe our homeland demands that I put them on, and I've come to serve you in any way I can." For my part, I admired him and thanked him, because this gesture of solidarity for the good of the homeland is a powerful message to me.

Wednesday, June 13, 1979.

I celebrated Mass for Saint Anthony in the parish of Soyapango, which venerates him as its patron saint. The attendance was large. We concelebrated with the three Fathers of Soyapango: Father Villarán, parish priest; Father Pedro Cortez, parochial vicar; and Father Heliodoro Orellana, chaplain of the Guadalupe Colony in Soyapango. In my homily, I sought to apply Saint Anthony's message to the circumstances of Soyapango, inviting them, based on the doctrine taught by Saint Anthony-the very doctrine of the Gospel-to communion, holiness, and commitment.

After Mass, I met with the youth group from that parish, and they asked me questions with absolute confidence that were very useful for my personal reflection. I encouraged them to always remain faithful and to have their own criteria, so as not to be fooled by what others say, but to be able to judge things with their own individual wisdom. I promised them that…we dedicate the afternoon, according to their circumstances and mine, to delve into the issues, especially of faith and politics, that seem to interest these young people so much.

Afterwards I dedicated the day to rest, going to the house of the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love in Planes de Renderos, where I stayed until night. I went to have dinner with the nuns of The Assumption who had invited me. There I met with Father Fabián and the Vicar General, Father Cortés, with whom we discussed the problems affecting our clergy and the diocese.

Especially from the parishes of Chalatenango, San José de la Montaña and other special circumstances.

Thursday, June 14, 1979.

I went to the Archbishop's Palace earlier than usual to assist some seminarians who wanted an interviewPersonal. The goodwill of these young people and their desire to live in the present are admirable. This healthy concern can easily be confused with other political or revolutionary aspects. It would be dangerous if one doesn't know how to drive, but if one takes advantage of it, these are impulses that seem very healthy to me for a modern priest.

This is why I insisted on identifying them as called to the priesthood, so that they may be, first and foremost, messengers of God's transcendence in the midst of a world so preoccupied with the present. But they may also know how to live this immanence with his people.

I also spoke with Father Pedraz of the radio station and with Architect Morales, who happened to be there and offered us some excellent ideas to get our new station up and running quickly.

Several priests came to the Archbishopric, with whom we spoke. We also spoke with the nuns, particularly Sister Socorro, an Oblate of Divine Love, who is concerned about the situation of her congregation and quite depressed by the departure of the former Mother Scaglietti, who left a significant void by resigning from her congregation. The same goes for the visit of the provincial of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, who currently teach at the Salvadoran high school but desire a more direct pastoral ministry with the people.

I directed them to Chalatenango, Amatepec, and, recently, to a much-needed ministry for the sick in the capital. The same goes for another parish that urgently needs the nuns' assistance: San Juan Opico, with its branch in Tacachico.

In the afternoon, I visited and celebrated Mass at the Sara nursing home. Five hundred elderly or disabled people live there; they aren't well cared for, but, thank God, the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart will provide very helpful pastoral care there, and the fruit of this was evident in this well-attended Mass, where I left them a message of consolation and Christian hope.

Among the wheelchair-bound, I found a catechist from the Chalatenango Relocation Center, who was left disabled precisely because a member of the National Guard shot him in the back. I thought, as he did, about how many disabled people from families abandoned by this senseless violence we are enduring.

I visited the novitiate of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart where I had dinner and where we talked about an apostolate to further spread devotion to the Heart of Jesus, adapted to our times. They were very enthusiastic, and we tried to organize a small group to reflect on how to carry out this task, which was entrusted to me for all of Central America during the seminar on devotion to the Heart of Jesus, held last May in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

I went to visit Father Arce, the parish priest of Jucuapa, at the Polyclinic. It seems that his condition, although the doctor hasn't told him so, is definitely such that a test is required, something he himself already senses. I tried to encourage him and see that he's in excellent spirits. He asked me, if this were his last illness, to do everything possible to ensure that Monsignor Rivera bury him in his parish church in Jucuapa.

I encouraged him not to dwell on these things, but to rely on me for everything and to remember that this honor belongs to him, since he had built this church and had been a beloved pastor in that city for a long time. I also visited a sick teacher recovering from a gunfight at this time of year, when more than 19 teachers have already died.

On my return to the residence I found a visit from General Medrano ,a very interesting conversation ManHighly informed about current politics and endowed with excellent principles, he criticizes the numerous recklessness, disorder, and errors

committed by the current government, the Armed Forces, and representatives of big business. We agreed on many things, and he promised me his help, just as I offered him my cooperation, always for the good of the country.

Friday, June 15, 1979.

There were several visits that day, but the most important, for me, was the interview with the director and head of the Archdiocesan Caritas, Father Tilo Sánchez and Rafael Medrano, and with the treasurer, Mr. Merlos, representing the Archdiocesan Caritas Council, Mauricio Merlos. We exchanged impressions on the functioning of the Caritas office, lamenting several shortcomings, but also appreciating the very positive aspects it is achieving throughout the Archdiocese.

Caritas is adopting a highly original approach. It is promoting, wherever possible, meetings in all parishes and cantons; organizing their respective committees; and promoting charitable work that truly fosters and educates love in our diocese. I congratulated them, but at the same time urged them to commit to improving the office from which all this work should radiate.

The other very important conversation was with the rector of the seminary, Father Gregorio Rosa, with whom we had dinner and then went to La Libertad, discussing various aspects of the Archdiocese, the seminarians, and relations with the other bishops. I believe this is a very effective element for the good of our Church and the unity of our hierarchy. I thanked him for all his suggestions and shared my thoughts on how to improve his work as rector, especially with our archdiocesan team and his relationship with the minor seminary.

I received the good news that they had found a replacement part to get the radio working, which had been down for three weeks due to technical defects.

Saturday, June 16, 1979.

Breakfast with the advisors to prepare this week's historical data for my homily. It's been an extremely intense week of human rights violations.

Of the murders stand out teachers, who are now 19. Finally, you can consult the international bulletin prepared by the Secretariat for the Means of Social Communication.

After seeing the ophthalmologist for an eye problem, I went to the polyclinic where Father Abdón Arce, parish priest of Jucuapa, had recently passed away. I expressed my condolences to some of the Jucuapa parishioners present, as well as to his family, especially his niece Elena, and tried to help them arrange his transfer to Jucuapa and burial in the parish church. I also promised to be present the next day, at least for a while, since I will be celebrating Corpus Christi that afternoon, the time of the funeral Mass.

Upon my arrival at the hospital, I met a representative of Catholic Relief Services, who had visited our diocesan Caritas and wanted to personally express their willingness to help and congratulate us on an organization that is breaking away from traditional norms to embody a true diocesan Caritas. They also expressed their willingness to offer any assistance for new programs that might emerge under this new Caritas inspiration. I felt great satisfaction and gratitude for this valuable collaboration.

In the afternoon, I went to confirm about twenty boys and girls, prepared by the Sisters of the Assumption in one of the most difficult neighborhoods, Colonia Morazán. I shared moments of great joy with this community, and at the end of the Mass, the confirmands expressed to me their deep feelings of solidarity and pastoral courage.

Sunday, June 17, 1979.

I started listening to Radio Ysax, which was broadcasting the six o'clock Mass from the Cathedral, but it was soon interrupted again, so I couldn't broadcast the eight o'clock Mass, which was well attended. Since it's the celebration of Corpus Christi, I had the idea of framing the Feast of the Body and Blood of the Lord by denouncing the many violations of so much human life, whether due to repression, terror, sins against nascent life, abortion, sterilization, and all criminal contraceptive methods.

I spoke about this at the University Round Table and urged people to avoid many sins, which undoubtedly contribute to social discontent among our people. A Colombian journalist, who works for several media outlets in the Americas, congratulated me on my homily. He asked to speak briefly for Radio Caracol in Colombia.

After Mass in the Cathedral, I traveled to Jucuapa, where I had promised to celebrate a midday Mass in memory of Father Arce, still in his sarcophagus, as his burial would take place the following day. I had the opportunity to greet many friends and send a Corpus Christi message to a deceased priest, telling them that the priesthood never ends and that the mission, as long as the pilgrimage of life lasts, is carried out through sacramental signs, but that in eternity it is the liturgy spoken of today in the Letter to the

Hebrews, where Christ, the High Priest, allows us to see and enjoy the definitive blessings.

When we returned, it was four in the afternoon, and the Corpus Christi Mass was beginning in the Cathedral. It was time for the homily, when I announced that the radio station was back on the air and that our Mass was being broadcast. The people filling the Cathedral applauded with great joy, as the silence of our radio station for technical reasons had been a long-awaited event for the past few weeks.

I took advantage of this first radio broadcast to invite those tuned in to join the procession, which would depart from the Cathedral around the park in honor of the Blessed Sacrament in about half an hour. The announcement was effective because many people began to arrive, forming a beautiful procession of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. After the blessing, in the Cathedral atrium, I received many good wishes, which I also shared with my parishioners, because together we had fun the joy of having the radio at the service of our community.

Monday, June 18, 1979.

The same Colombian journalist I mentioned yesterday interviewed me again. An Italian journalist who studies Latin American affairs also wanted to interview me.I stop ask me of the situation and role of the Church in our country.

We had a secretarial meeting with Ms. Godoy, archivist, with whom we are collaborating to better organize the archiving system of our archdiocesan Curia.

I was very pleased with my conversation with Father Rafael, rector of the minor seminary in Chalatenango. I was moved by his sincere confession of feeling very happy in his first months of priesthood. He also said that our community and the role of Archbishop give him strength, or, as he put it, "confirm me in the faith and in the priesthood." He will have a few days off and return with new goals, always focused on vocation ministry. I think he is an excellent young man who will bring great honor to our Church.

Likewise, I was deeply comforted to know that the priests of the Flor Blanca Vicariate in San José de la Montaña met today to better guide the pastoral life of that parish, currently without a pastor. And that the Vicariate, as a team and as a diocese, will guide us along the lines of our pastoral ministry. At the same time, a meeting of religious women working in the Archdiocese's pastoral ministry was held at the Seminary to analyze and evaluate the work of the Archdiocesan religious women in their respective pastoral areas. This work of the Archdiocesan religious women is becoming more providential every day.

That evening, I attended the Cursillo de Cristiandad ultreya and took the opportunity to propose two projects and ask for their collaboration: the first, in planning an urban pastoral program; the second, in drafting the pastoral letter. Regarding the planning, I said that the metropolitan area of San Salvador requires a very thorough study, and since their Cursillo de Cristiandad aims to understand the environments, they will help me guide this planning by environment.

And regarding pastoral care, I noticed that the questions I had left for consultation had already been posted in your journal, and that there is great enthusiasm in offering this collaboration, as well as in helping me with pastoral planning. A meeting was scheduled soon to study these proposals in more depth, but I noticed, as I told you, that "the fruit is

ripe," and that, thank God, these courses are short. They can truly be an instrument of pastoral care for the archdiocese.

Tuesday, June 19, 1979.

At eight o'clock we had the meeting we had agreed to hold on Tuesday to evaluate the functioning of the Archbishop's Curia.

We dedicated this meeting specifically to discussing the operation of the radio station and the Secretariat of Social Communications. Architect Morales offered to resolve the issue of the site where the new antenna will be installed.I'm hiaritoVarious aspects of the responsibilities and duties of the various members of the Social Media Secretariat were also discussed. The possibility of modifying the format of the Orientation for financial reasons was also discussed, but the matter was left to the clergy for discussion at the next meeting.

Subsequently, I held a meeting with the priests, nuns, and laity of the Vicariate of Mejicanos. It was extremely interesting. Father Rafael Palacios motivated the vicariate with a biblical reading and reflection to evaluate their pastoral work, with a true sense of humility and sincerity. Difficulties, problems between priests and laity, and everything related to better functioning were discussed, unifying various aspects of the criteria that should govern the pastoral work of that region. The meeting was so rich in initiatives, discussions, and suggestions that it was agreed to continue next week.

This afternoon, an interesting interview was held with the Marist Brother Provincial and several school principals from El Salvador. They lamented the distance that has grown between their community and the Archbishop.

I clearly explained my reasons and concerns, and they spoke frankly about the difficulties. By mutual agreement, Sister Nelly Rodríguez, a member of the board of directors of the Federation of Catholic Educational Centers, joined us. With her, we discussed the pastoral relations of the Marist schools in the exciting field of education, seen as a pastoral ministry of the Archdiocese. We agreed to strengthen our relationship and work together to establish a pastoral ministry truly in harmony with the Archbishopric, at the service of these people with such unique characteristics.

CHAPTER 16.

Year 1979.

Diary from June 20th to July 8th.

1979.

Wednesday, June 20, 1979.

While preparing to record this morning for the interview that will be broadcast on the radio today, I received the tragic news that Father Rafael Palacios was murdered in Santa Tecla, around 9:00 a.m. I concluded the recording by referring to this tragic event

and addressed the Senate Council, meeting at the Somascan Sisters' house, to discuss what we should do in light of this latest tragic situation. I urgently needed to hear the Senate's opinion to resolve the immediate issues relating to his funeral and the participation of the clergy and the people.

And then, a more in-depth study of the situation surrounding this event. Regarding the first, we agreed to collect the Father's body and, after preparing it, bring it back to Santa Tecla, where he is much loved, so that he can be buried in the Church of Calvary. A Mass would be celebrated there that evening. Then, the next day, we would take him to the Cathedral for the funeral and then to Suchitoto, at the request of his family, who are originally from there. And after another Mass in Suchitoto, he would be buried in the parish church.

While the Senate continued its deliberations, I went to Santa Tecla, where the Padre's body had already been transferred. I simply announced that I would return with him for a wake at Calvary and that invitations would be extended for the evening. From there, I headed to the courthouse, where the forensic examination was being performed on the Padre's body, riddled with bullets that had damaged his face and other parts of his body. The core group of the community, who had loved him so much at Santa Tecla, was there, in tears of despair. I tried to encourage them and returned to the Senate meeting; it was already over.

However, there were people in the Archbishop's residence who wanted to comment on this event; among them, his sisters and brother. Along with other priests and seminarians, we had a very edifying conversation about Father's life from his childhood, through the exercise of his priesthood, until the hour of his death. It's wonderful to learn

about a life in which there were doubts and prejudices. And I believe this family reflection, which we held in a room in the Archbishop's residence, was very instructive.

This afternoon I gave an interview to Brazilian television about the situation of the Church and the country.

They also helped me set up the meeting room for religious and lay people at the Colegio de La Sagrada Familia, for which I am grateful, because they do it with great care and expertise.

That evening, I went to celebrate Mass in the Church of Calvary in Santa Tecla, which was completely packed. Near the body of Father Palacios, there were many priests, no fewer than 25 from across the Archdiocese, who concelebrated with me. And we discussed how to celebrate the next day. After agreeing that...we will gather in theBasilica of the Sacred Heart at ten in the morning and from there we will lead the coffin to the Cathedral for his funeral.

In my homily, I commented on this thought: that Father Palacios had found in Saint Thecla what every faithful priest finds wherever he works: so much love and so much hate. And testimony to this hate was her tragic death by murder, which showed how the Church, which must fulfill its duty to denounce sin, must be willing to suffer the consequences of having touched that monster that causes so much evil in the world: sin.

Thursday, June 21, 1979.

The hospital nuns were the first to remind me that this day is the anniversary of my episcopal ordination, and, truth be told, it was nine years ago that I received the fullness of the priesthood. Although they were supposed to celebrate Father Palacios's funeral Mass, the nuns decided to celebrate a more intimate Mass in the hospital chapel, to give thanks to God and reflect on this ninth anniversary.

It seemed deeply meaningful to me to celebrate this anniversary with a murdered priest and with the full solidarity of all the priests of the Archdiocese and many from other dioceses, including the Bishop of Santiago de María, Archbishop Rivera. Therefore, although I celebrated this private Mass with great intimacy before the Lord and representing the People of God, a small group of nuns, and the sick, the funeral of Father Rafael Palacios seemed to me another magnificent way to celebrate this anniversary.

He was carried by Saint Thecla, and all the priests, nuns, and numerous faithful were waiting at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. They accompanied the body in an impressively silent procession to the Cathedral, where a very solemn Mass was also celebrated.

I believe no fewer than 60 priests filled the sanctuary and surrounded Father Palacios's coffin. In my homily, I tried to interpret the voice of the blood of a murdered priest, which reveals three points to us: first, the mystery of iniquity, which highlights the unjust situation of sinful structures in our country, and the sin of the Church itself, which often becomes complicit by pointing fingers or questioning priests for their efforts to keep pace with the Church's pastoral work.

The second point is the mystery of fidelity, how dying in this way is not because we are evil, but because we are faithful, like Christ to the Father, like the Church to

Christ. And third, gathering a message of hope, since this death gives us a glimpse of the Church's work, that of forming new men and women in love and opening them to the eternal prospect that death so clearly indicates. Around three o'clock this afternoon, Father Palacios's body was taken to his adopted hometown, Suchitoto, where it will be buried, and tomorrow at ten o'clock the funeral Mass will be held, before he is buried in the same church. I hope to be able to attend.

This afternoon I also went to fulfill my promise to celebrate the patronal feast of San Luis Mariona, in the neighborhood of Padre Julio Orellana's parish in Cuscatancingo. The welcome and celebration were very warm and affectionate. Padre Julio Orellana had prepared a group of boys and girls to receive Holy Confirmation. The catechism was excellent, and the children were well prepared. We celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit and mentioned the local patron saint, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, as an example of a Christian who lived through his baptism and confirmation.

That evening, I responded to Atilio Viéytez's invitation, along with Father Estrada and the rector of the University Centro American (Uca), Ramón Mayorga. The conversation was extremely interesting, focusing on the country's current political problems and the situation of our Church.

Friday, June 22, 1979.

In the morning, I went to Suchitoto to celebrate the funeral Mass of Father Rafael Palacios. The spacious church was completely packed with parishioners from Suchitoto and other communities who had come here.

Many priests, many nuns. In my homily, I connected the idea of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the death of Father Rafael. The priest presents the Mystery of Christ, which is a Mystery of love. It was the perfect date for Rafael Palacios to return, dead, to his adopted hometown and say, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "Mission accomplished!"

Father Rafael Barahona and Father Palacios's brother, Carlos, also spoke. We walked through the park carrying the body with a large crowd, and then it was buried in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Amid Easter carols, the tears seemed illuminated by a great Christian hope.

I went to lunch with the community of Dominican nuns who run a very well-run school there. I congratulated them and encouraged them.

In the afternoon, the Mass of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was held in the Basilica. The turnout was good, although Father Cortez, the Basilica's parish priest, told me there were more people last year, perhaps due to a torrential rain that had fallen shortly before or the general fear people feel in this environment. In my homily, I tried to explain how the Church was already in the historical Heart of Christ. And the Heart of Christ remains present in the Church to sanctify her and place her at the service of the world, with the mission he brought from the Father.

Finally, still in a parish atmosphere, we went to dinner at the home of Dr. Mario Levy Van Severén, a member of the parish council.

Saturday, June 23, 1979.

Like every Saturday, we met for breakfast at the home of the Somascan nuns to take stock of the week and gather information for my homily.

I wanted to express my frustration at the cold reception given to the tragic death of Father Rafael Palacios. I highlighted, for example, the basketball game between two Catholic schools while the Father's body was lying in state before his funeral Mass in the Cathedral, and the insensitivity that was evident. It was necessary to analyze what was happening in the face of these events, which should inspire greater solidarity throughout the Church. For this and other reasons requiring further reflection, we have agreed to hold a meeting next Monday with those with whom we regularly consult.

And we will dedicate the entire morning to allowing the necessary time to draw conclusions, since we have also been charged, on behalf of the clergy assembly, with continuing the initiatives undertaken at that time. Of course, the bells are rung every evening at eight o'clock, but it was regrettable that the radio, almost out of pure courtesy, referred to the tragic death of the Father on the day of his funeral. Subsequently, no mention or appeal was made regarding this circumstance.

A single Mass was also announced for Saturday, in eight days, which will be announced as a novena in suffrage for Father Rafael.

I went with Father Estrada to see Dr. Badía, rector of the National University, to try to encourage him not to resign, since his presence is great hope for the University. However, he seems to sense great difficulty in the face of the disorder among these

groups of university students, who are even ignorant and seem to be manipulated for purposes they don't acknowledge, but which are causing great harm to the University. He believes that Dr. Badía won't be enough, especially since many are resigning. I insisted on encouraging him and even offering him my moral support.

Sunday, June 24, 1979.

We celebrated Mass for St. John the Baptist in the Cathedral. As every Sunday, there was a large turnout, which is a great pastoral encouragement. At eleven o'clock in the morning, I celebrated the patronal Mass in Chalatenango in honor of St. John the Baptist. It was also a great spiritual consolation. The Minor Seminary celebrated Mass. Today it celebrated its second anniversary and is thriving thanks to the grace of God and under the guidance of a very active Episcopal Vicar and a very understanding rector of the seminary, Father Urrutia. Priestly Youth.

After Mass, we shared lunch and a small family celebration at the seminary. The atmosphere of this community is authentically Christian and very welcoming.

In the afternoon, we had an interesting conversation with the family, where Father Rafael Palacios received a warm welcome during his stay in our Archdiocese. I received some very important revelations that shed light on certain aspects of the Father's assassination, his personality, and his pastoral approach.

It seems to me that we are faced with the case of a misunderstood priest who left a significant mark in his pastoral work, especially in basic ecclesial communities.

Monday, June 25, 1979.

After breakfast, we spent the entire morning at the Passionist Sisters' house, on the road to Planes de Renderos, studying the internal state of the Church and its impact on the world around us, in relation to the assassination of Father Palacios. I brought with me the professor I mentioned yesterday, who was very familiar with Father Palacios's life, to tell us about the assassination itself and the background that may have led to this situation. These were very important revelations, especially regarding the details that made Father Palacios's life so difficult in his relationships with the hierarchy and other priests.

Continuing our reflection, Father Moreno offered a broad analysis of his views on the situation within the Church and on the Church's relations with the outside world. Very valuable insights were offered, and a panorama was clarified that, while troubling, offers a very optimistic perspective on the life of our Church, which is undoubtedly maturing, but faces serious challenges, especially in internal divisions and in its relationship with the government and the people.

This afternoon, I met with Father Jesús Delgado and Father Rafael Moreno to outline the pastoral letter I intend to publish on August 6th. We expect broad feedback from priests and the rank and file, as a survey has been conducted on the questions this pastoral letter will seek to answer. This survey is intended to be a response to the dialogue that has been initiated to share our opinions on the situation and possible solutions in our country.

Our pastoral letter aims to be an authentically ecclesial and pastoral voice, to point out the problems and possible solutions, as we can express ourselves pastorally. This

consultation will continue.carryingin the next one clergy meeting where this rich material will be collected and delivered to the various commissions that will draft the first version of the letter.

Tuesday, June 26, 1979.

We devoted the entire morning to the Pastoral Commission meeting. This meeting, in my opinion, is the most important, as the Diocese lives on pastoral ministry, and this commission will help coordinate, inspire, and serve the Archdiocesan pastoral ministry. I was delighted that the Vicars, religious representatives, and lay representatives of each vicariate are understanding the pastoral ideal of our Archdiocese.

Today we explored the objectives of this Pastoral Commission, and I was delighted that you recalled the Pastoral Week of 1975, which defined the Archdiocese's current path, emphasizing the formation of basic ecclesial communities and the training of pastoral leaders and workers. This was the focus of our reflection. There were several other aspects that demonstrate the vitality of our Diocese. Thanks to:God and we asked him to continue to bless us.

A meeting with FAPU members was scheduled for the afternoon. Father Moreno, Doris Osegueda, high school student Roberto Cuéllar, and I were on our side. We spoke specifically to dispel some of Fapu's prejudices toward the Church. I believe it was helpful if the explanations were sincere.

Wednesday, June 27, 1979.

Before heading to the office, we received interesting visits from Father Ramiro, a Passionist whose continued service to our archdiocese was needed; from Father Rafael Urrutia, who presented plans for the minor seminary and the archdiocesan vocation ministry; and from Carlos Francisco Palacios, brother of Father Rafael Palacios, who also shared his concerns as a young man who wishes to enter the seminary, but before leaving, to take up a pastoral assignment.

I pointed out to him his brother Rafael's vacant position at the parish of San Francisco, and he was delighted to be able to work there. He also made further visits to the seminary before joining the council of the Mejicanos vicariate. The parish priest of Colonia Atlacatl is facing threats against a family from clandestine organizations, and he wants to help them, as our Church is doing, thank God.

Miss Raquel also remains in hiding due to threats from the Union of White Warriors. The meeting at the Mejicanos Vicariate was also extremely interesting, as it was a follow-up to the one hosted last week by Father Rafael Palacios. There is no doubt that his spirit was with us, as we clearly and sincerely expressed our shortcomings, setbacks, and difficulties.

But these things became clearer during the discussion, so much so that at midday I was able to make a very optimistic reflection, thinking that our meeting this morning was similar to those in the Acts of the Apostles and that we should seek that ideal of forming the Christian community, which is the best way to resolve all problems, when we all propose to truly be the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Passionist nuns who work in San José Villanueva also came to tell me that they had been persecuted there too, that attempts had been made to set fire to their church, and that they had to remove the images and store them in their private residence to avoid further damage.

In the afternoon, I met with the employees of the Criterio printing company to celebrate the feast of their patron saint, Saint John, and to share a conversation with them about their work situation. In attendance were the Director General of the Curia, Engineer Galván, and Doris Osegueda, Secretary of Social Communications; as well as María Isabel and Silvia, whom I entrusted with fostering a sense of community among these employees.

We created a climate of trust so they could express a series of anomalies in human relations at the printing plant. They complained primarily about the two store managers, who seemed to be treating them rather poorly; despite this, we made them understand that they were doing their duty and showing understanding.

I also promised you that he would participate in theTheir requests, once we were able to analyze them in a frank dialogue with the personnel managers. I believe it was very helpful to be able to say, above all, that we must be united by a spirit, since we are part of the Church's collaboration in such an important sector as newspaper publishing and the maintenance of a printing press that, thank God, our Archdiocese owns.

That evening, Father Rafael Urrutia and seminarian Joaquín came to visit me and shared their experiences at the minor seminary in Chalatenango. I asked Rafael Urrutia, along with the current rector of the minor seminary of San José de la Montaña, to take

charge of the parish of the same name so that we could develop a vocational program there.

Thursday, June 28, 1979.

I began my office work with an interesting meeting with Father Rafael Urrutia and Father Sigfredo, both young men, to whom I explained my plan to make the Parish of San José de la Montaña a central parish for vocation ministry. Father Urrutia welcomed the idea with great enthusiasm. Father Sigfredo has his reservations about devoting more attention to the Seminary, but I believe that together they can advance this beautiful work of a parish founded specifically for the Seminary and which has been diverted solely to a form of worship limited almost exclusively to the celebration of Mass.

Father Salvador Colorado, a member of the Major Seminary team and a member of our Archdiocese, also expressed his willingness to collaborate. I hope this project can soon become a reality. There have been several visits, including that of the Venezuelan chargé d'affaires, who kindly offered his services to our Archdiocese. He also offered financial assistance, if needed. I thank him and will keep him in mind.

I had lunch with Mrs. Rodríguez, mother of Sister Nelly Rodríguez, with whom I was very close friends in San Miguel, when I was parish priest in that city.

In the afternoon, I had an interview with an English journalist. Also, a meeting with the printers at our Criterio Printing House and some specific work-related issues I'll try to address. Humanizing, too,their difficult situation.

Mr. Arturo Meza also visited me and spoke to me about the challenging work situations at La Constancia. I offered to share with them the Christian principles that, according to evangelical thought, guide the collaboration between employers and employees. We'll discuss this next week, God willing.

Friday, June 29, 1979.

I celebrated this St. Peter's Day at the Santa Inés school in Santa Tecla, where the Sisters,teachers and students celebrate the Feast of Board. I spoke to them about the significance of the two saints of the day: St. Peter as head of the Church and St. Paul as representative of the Gentile world, that is, of all of us who make up the non-Jewish people, but who, with Jewish Christians, form the one Church of Jesus Christ.

After Mass, there was a very pleasant event that highlighted the Pope's role in today's world. After sharing a few joyful moments with the young people, I went to spend the rest of the day at the home of the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love in Planes de Renderos.

Saturday, June 30, 1979.

The main event of the day was the single Mass, agreed upon in a plenary meeting of the clergy as a gesture of solidarity from the entire Archdiocese in response to the passing of Father Rafael Palacios. The nine days of prayer in various communities have concluded, and today, at noon, we had a large gathering of priests from communities across the Archdiocese, nearly a hundred in number.

It was a very solemn and well-attended celebration. They felt like a well-formed community, united in a Cathedral, which gave a magnificent impression of active participation in the Eucharist. In my homily, I interpreted this unique Mass as a gesture of solidarity on the part of the Diocese for three purposes: first, to reaffirm the infinite and divine value of the Eucharist, profaned by so much individualism and celebrations for purposes not always in accord with the divine mind of the Lord.

Secondly, we also have espresso our appreciation to the priest, precisely in memory of a deceased priest, murdered in such a vile way, and as a demonstration of what a Church is, deprived of the Eucharist and the priesthood, as all the churches of the Diocese were, on this day of a single Mass. And, thirdly, we also express the voice of the united people of God, a people who pray, a people who protest against the abuses inflicted upon them, but not with vengeance or hatred, but rather a people who cry out for the conversion of sinners.

This morning at breakfast, as is customary on Saturdays, we reviewed the week to prepare the news I will focus on in my homily. And in the evening, we met with the base community promoted by Father Rafael Palacios in Santa Tecla to provide pastoral guidance.

Sunday, July 1, 1979.

The Mass in the Cathedral continues, thank God, and the Gospel and other readings have given us the opportunity to present Christ as the divine power that gives life, as love and justice, which is the key to solving our country's social problems.

After the mass in the Cathedral I went to a mass at the Tinetti market, where the people were very happy and I preached to them about the Sacred Heart of Jesus,congratulating themAndguiding them so that this devotion should not fail, but should be cultivated adequately.

In the afternoon, at five o'clock, I preached the Holy Hour at the Hospital of Divine Providence, with an extraordinary turnout. The reading for the second Sunday, St. Paul recommending the Corinthians to take up a collection for Jerusalem, gave me the opportunity to speak about the spirit of poverty: the true solution to social injustice in our world.he will graduate the collection that the hospital is taking to purchase a new plot of land and continue its charitable work there for the sick and, above all, for the orphaned children of patients who die in this hospital.

Monday, July 2, 1979.

Today, Monsignor Urioste, Vicar General, returned to the office of the General Vicariate after a month's absence on vacation in the Holy Land. Father Cristóbal Cortés took his place. On Monday morning, for the past three weeks, Coralia Godoy has been providing guidance to the Curia secretaries for the unification of our Archdiocesan Archives. We are also working with the Vicar General and the Chancellor to ensure everyone adheres to the same standards.

The Nuncio returned from Rome and wanted to speak with me. I went to the Nunciature to feel more comfortable, and he told me that the Holy Father and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops are concerned about the division within the Salvadoran

episcopate and that they expect much from my collaboration for this unity. I expressed the reasons I have often stated: that there is something personal about some of them and that this task is very difficult for me; however, I will do everything in my power. In particular, I expressed my difficulties with the Auxiliary Bishop, Bishop Revelo, and with Bishop Aparicio, who clearly display personal attitudes toward me.

However, I have the best will and, with God's grace, I will do everything possible for this unification, because I am the first to realize how much damage it has caused to our environment. The Nuncio also expressed his concern for Father Rogelio Esquivel to me. Not as an intervention, but as the word of a friend, that he will try to help him. I also promised him, after explaining that he is the one who has retired, but I also believe this is a work of priestly charity, and I told him to do everything possible to have him visit me and that I will try to organize things as best as possible, always safeguarding our pastoral care and the sensibilities of the entire presbyterate.

The Nuncio was very friendly and willing to cooperate. difficult pastoral duties. I noted that he had received some advice in Rome and had been extremely kind to me; for my part, I also expressed that I felt no aversion, but that I had noticed in him a partiality toward the group of bishops who disagreed with me, and that this had undoubtedly significantly influenced the division. That, if he had been more impartial and truly helped us seek unity, such unity would have been achieved.

In the evening, a prayer vigil was held at the Cathedral, promoted by the Confederation of Religious Men and Women. Several priests and numerous faithful from various communities participated, including the prayer communities of the Renewal in the Spirit Movement.It was very motivated; I explained to them in the homily my hope for a diocese that places its trust in prayer.

Tuesday, July 3, 1979.

I celebrated Mass at seven in the morning at the Tinetti Market. This was the conclusion of the celebrations in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which lasted throughout the month of June until July 3rd. They are very welcoming people, and I felt very comfortable among them.

Subsequently, I attended the clergy meeting, which was also very interesting, as the two main topics were: first, a review of the attitudes adopted towards the death of Father Rafael Palacios. Successes and failures were highlighted with complete frankness. Above all, greater solidarity and sensitivity were requested from all priests so that we could distort the agreements made.

An Oversight Committee has been appointed to ensure that no surprises arise.These difficult situations, but that there was always someone ready to take the initiative we needed right from the start. The other point was the consultation for the pastoral letter I'm preparing, and several parishes and communities offered their valuable contributions.

In the afternoon, I had a meeting with the Archdiocesan major seminarians, where I saw them mature significantly and confidently discuss their concerns with their bishop. I congratulated them and told them that both the content and the manner in which they had conducted it had greatly satisfied me, and that I hoped they would continue to be well-prepared for the priesthood, just as God desires them at this time.

I received a visit from the person in chargeA Canadian business woman who wishes to contact the Church to learn about the situation of the Church and the country, as she feels somewhat alienated from all this, having her headquarters for Central American countries in Costa Rica. I offered her the services of the Information Secretariat and expressed the Church's best wishes for these matters.

Wednesday, July 4, 1979.

This morning, a solemn Mass was celebrated at the Church of Mary Help of Christians. The Mass was organized by the Mercedarian Eucharistic Sisters on the occasion of the religious profession of two nuns.

A meeting of the nuns dedicated to parish ministry was held at the Archbishop's residence. A meeting of the Administrative Commission was also held.

In the evening, I received a visit from the young student Armando Castro, who will be traveling to the United States to participate in an ecumenical conference of university students. He is a generous and kind young man, very interested in my candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize. I thank him and wish him every success on his upcoming trip. He would be very trustworthy;has a strong evangelical sense, being a member of the Ecumenical Student Movement.

My Wednesday interview show aired.

Thursday, July 5, 1979.

I held a consultation breakfast to present the contributions received from various parish priests and communities for my upcoming pastoral letter. Father Fabián Amaya, Father Ellacuría, Father Sebastián, and Father Moreno were present. Other priests and lay people I had invited were unable to attend but were available to collaborate. I gave them the materials, and we discussed a project to integrate all these suggestions.

Initially, the plan will be to examine and present the country's reality; to research, using the Puebla Document as criteria in particular, and to act, providing pastoral guidance to present a Church that is identical to itself, from which it must offer perspectives and guidance at this time of searching for solutions to the country's situation.

Subsequently, at the Archbishop's Palace, I held a very interesting meeting to study the situation of the Parish of San José de la Montaña. My proposal to transfer Father Cortés from the Basilica to San José de la Montaña was accepted, and to fill the post at the Basilica with the transfer of Father Efraín from Chalatenango. Father Cortés will be joined as assistants by Monsignor Urioste and Father Urrutia, director of the Minor Seminary. The current director, Father Sigfredo, will go to Chalatenango to replace Father Urrutia at the minor seminary there.

Father Salvador Colorado, an archdiocesan member of the Major Seminary's formation team, will also serve as coadjutor. San José de la Montaña is not simply a parish, but an archdiocesan center for vocation promotion.

Father Efraín, who was unable to be present this morning, arrived this afternoon and gladly accepted. We will just have to wait for certain circumstances to make these transfers possible.

An interesting, intimate, yet deeply meaningful meeting was held in the afternoon. The managers of the La Constancia factory, who had visited the Archbishop's Palace several times to seek the Church's opinion on the problem,patron- The employees of this large company attended a meeting I organized to present to them in more detail the Church's social doctrine. I received very insightful advice from Mr. Antonio Orellana, Father Walter Guerra, the bachelor Roberto Cuéllar, and an American nun who works as a social worker on one of the estates in the diocese of Santa Ana.

The invaluable collaboration of all these people left a profound impression on the Mezas, who expressed their profound gratitude and suggested that further meetings would be appropriate, if they didn't cause too much inconvenience. I have the impression that this rapprochement will be of great importance, as capitalists approach the Church in search of Christian solutions to the country's social situation.

I was unable to attend Mass at the Salvadoran high school where the Federation of Catholic Schools celebrated a Mass for the eternal rest of Brother Blanco, killed in Nicaragua.

Friday, July 6, 1979.

Today, a meeting was held with leaders from across the country at the archdiocesan Caritas. At the Archbishop's residence, I met with Father Joaquín Brizuela to discuss the

pastoral issues facing Ciudad Arce. I have great expectations of him. I believe the problematic situation can change if we continue to engage in dialogue. The seminarian collaborators are eager to adopt a pastoral approach similar to that of the entire Archdiocese.

Mother Giuseppina's retirement will also be beneficial for the unification of the pastoral care of that parish.

At five in the afternoon I received a journalist from El Mercurio, from Chile.

Saturday, July 7, 1979.

After the consultation breakfast to prepare the homily, I went to the Good Shepherd Center, where Sister Luz del Perpetuo Socorro passed away and where the funeral Mass will be held today.small old lady of the Institute of the Cross, a branch of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd. I felt the immense affection of that community for their pastor and the power of the prayer that rises from there to heaven, for the intentions of the bishop and the diocese. I thanked them and tried to reciprocate with my liturgical service, in which I encouraged them to be faithful like the nun who left us.

A grieving mother was waiting for me at my home, along with the wife of her son, a fifth-year medical student who had passed away. She confided in me, and I understood the depth of her grief. I promised her I would do everything in my power; above all, encouraging her toDon't lose their trust and rely on their prayers. Tomorrow, during Mass, I will speak about this case as a new injustice being committed.

In the afternoon, I accepted the invitation of the Santa Tecla market, along with the parish priest of Concepción, Father Alvarenga. We went; we received a warm and affectionate welcome from the children and the women and men who work in the market. I spoke to them about the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who continues his love in the Church, and that we are all Church and must make the heart of Christ present through our holiness, through our justice, through everything that makes our lives more loving and fraternal.

After Mass, a large crowd accompanied me to the Convent of the Concepción, where I affectionately greeted the people.

Sunday, July 8, 1979.

The usual mass in the Cathedral, at eight o'clock, was very crowded and the biblical readings were given the opportunity forIntroducing the theme of the prophet: the title of the homily is "The prophet is the presence of God in society." I developed the theme by presenting how the initiative always comes from God, how the prophet is simply an instrument of God, and how society accepts or rejects God in the person of the prophet.

The day passed without incident. In the afternoon, I accompanied the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love on a walk to their estate, where, thank God, I rested.

CHAPTER 17.

Year 1979.

Diary from July 9th to 27th.

1979.

Monday, July 9, 1979.

We began the week with a meeting of secretaries led by Ms. Godoy, which focused primarily on archiving issues, but today we expanded our concerns to various aspects of the Archbishop's Secretariat and my Special Secretariat.

After taking care of other official matters, I traveled to the town of El Paraíso, in Chalatenango, where the Bethlemitas Sisters had invited me to lunch and offered me an atolada. It was a very interesting and pleasant pastoral experience, as that church and convent, once seemingly dead, are now the center of a swarm of faithful, especially young people, who come to live their Christian life alongside the nuns.

The atolada took place near the river, where the boys had set up a pergola and where the various groups of women, young people and children met.they have demonstrated WithSimple conversations, with artistic gestures that above all expressed the sincerity and simplicity of those people, we concluded with a Mass in the parish church, where I expressed my gratitude and encouraged them to continue building the

community, which already had solid foundations and which it would have been a shame to squander through lack of perseverance.

Tuesday, July 10, 1979.

Like every Tuesday, the Executive Council of the Curia meets. It is composed of the Vicar General, the Chancellor, the Administrator, and Engineer Silva, who provides us with very helpful advice on behalf of Vivienda Mínima. Today, as in previous weeks, we devoted ourselves to studying the functioning of the radio station, but we also discussed other general aspects of the Secretariat, the archives, and various aspects of the functioning of the Archdiocesan Government. These meetings are very useful and I believe they will lead to greater efficiency and order in our pastoral and administrative work.

Several priests visited, especially Father Manuel Reyes, along with an evangelical pastor, to propose an ecumenical charity project and request a contribution, some of which has already been made. I congratulated them and encouraged them to continue because it seemed like an excellent project that would benefit Father Reyes' parish, 10 de Septiembre, as well as the pastor's evangelical community. I told them that ecumenism, if properly studied, is a true spiritual movement of conversion to an authentic Gospel.

In the afternoon, a meeting was held with Father Pedraz, Secretary of Social Media, and the Vicar General to discuss the radio station's activities. It was essentially agreed to appoint Mr. Napoleón Navarro Oviedo as General Director.

Wednesday, July 11, 1979.

I spent the entire morning at the Domus Mariae in Mejicanos, where I attended an interesting meeting of the Vicariate of Mejicanos. The Executive Committee, which assists the Vicar, Father Samuel Orellana, was very active.

Today's meeting organized the various functions of the Parish, grouping them into three commissions: one for social promotion; one for growth in faith; and one for the visible Church and its structures. This is the Medellín model, but with commissions addressing the different needs of this Parish. After lunch, the meeting continued to reflect on the new meaning of the Church.

Thursday, July 12, 1979.

Today we had a meeting with the managers of the Criterio Typography workshop because there were some difficulties with the workers.to endure ThatThe workers, many of them apprentices, are at fault; they are not performing their jobs well and are demanding benefits, which will be addressed fairly. Therefore, in agreement with them and in accordance with the clarifications from the shop managers, the list of requests submitted by a group of workers will be considered.

I have strongly urged that in this case we act with the utmost diligence to avoid union scandals and cultivate a more humane relationship with our workers at this Catholic printing house.

The morning was intense, with visits and discussions in the Curia.

At four in the afternoon, I went to Soyapango to see the church land where Caritas plans to build its winery. Also present were the parish priest and the women of the Archdiocesan Caritas Commission, along with Luis Alonso Machado, representing the Archdiocesan Administrative Commission. We agreed to approach this commission, which had recommended selling the highly valuable land and purchasing it elsewhere for a winery. But the commission seemed more inclined to... adapt the site and make compromises to implement and support some educational and social projects for the benefit of the Soyapango Parish.

I find this request very useful and will support it, as it represents a presence of the Church in a sector where it has not been present until now. I was accompanied by Father Nicolás González, who enthusiastically commented on the state of the Archdiocese's pastoral care.

And after dinner, I met with the team from the San José de la Montaña Central Major Seminary, with whom we discussed many aspects, both regarding the seminarians of the Archdiocese and the life of the Seminary and the management of the Seminary's assets, in agreement between the Archdiocese, which owns them, and the Seminary team that manages the Seminary.

Friday, July 13, 1979.

There are three pastoral activities I can highlight today: first, the working lunch with the speakers of the Fourth Pastoral Letter. They presented their studies with great

expertise, and we also summarized the survey conducted among priests and communities; together, this provides invaluable material for expressing the Church's views at this time when national dialogue is needed.

We will be able to speak as a Church, and from the very foundations of the Church, with the official expression of a pastoral letter. I pray that what follows, which consists of better bringing these parts together and producing a definitive draft, will be blessed by the Holy Spirit who illuminates the path of our Christians at this time.

The other meeting took place at the Passionist Sisters' house, on the road to Planes de Renderos. It was very interesting. It brought together the families of the five murdered priests. With the exception of Father Ernesto Barrera's family, they all presented themselves very well and spoke with the familiarity of those who have known them since childhood about these priests called by God to be the supreme witness of shedding their blood for Jesus Christ, for justice, for truth.

It was agreed to write all these memoirs as an example for Christians. Other legal and pastoral options were also discussed, so that the example of these martyrs would not be lost and that God's justice would be respected in them too. The spirit of forgiveness and the call to conversion that prevailed over all the comments were edifying.

Finally, in the afternoon, I went to the beaches of Acajutla with the seminarians who will have aThe meeting that lasted until the morning. But I only managed to stay this afternoon, until late evening. I had dinner with them and we had an initial meeting, where they expressed their concerns about the integration of the Archdiocese's two seminaries, the Major and Minor, which was the primary purpose of this meeting.

One can observe frankness, courage, and sincerity in expressing displeasure, as well as a sincere desire to find solutions so that the future clergy of the archdiocese can prepare for their mission with a greater sense of unity and teamwork.

Saturday, July 14, 1979.

I went to Comasagua, where Father Chalo González had prepared a group for Confirmation, but I was surprised to arrive at the agreed-upon time of nine in the morning and see no one in or around the church. I expressed my surprise to the parish priest, perhaps a little annoyed, and he told me the crowd was cold. I insisted that perhaps the priest had been more motivated. However, when the bells began to ring, a few people arrived, but only one child arrived for Confirmation.

During the Confirmation Mass, I tried to show the utmost kindness and explain the indifference toward God, asking those present to inspire their community with the goodness of Our Lord. After Mass, I invited people to stay and discuss this situation, and, along with the parish priest, several people acknowledged that there is indeed a sense of coldness and, above all, fear regarding the situation in the country.

But some lay people also frankly said that Father Tirandolo needed more motivation, that under the previous parish priest there had been many catechists and much life in the countryside and in the village, although less in the village. I spoke fraternally with Father Tirandolo.cheer up, because it is a difficult task that he has to perform in that city.

Sunday, July 15, 1979.

This vigil of Our Lady of Mount Carmel requires a great commitment, indicative of our people's fervor for this Marian devotion. I dedicated the Cathedral Mass to honoring the Blessed Virgin under this title of Mount Carmel, and I presented the Virgin as a model of Christian imitation, living the Gospel, which in this case invites us to share in the prophetic mission of Jesus Christ. And I spoke of the Virgin as faithful to the Word of the Lord, a collaborator in spreading God's message.

After Mass in the Cathedral, I went to the Belén School, where the Carmelites of St. Joseph celebrated the profession of seven new nuns. Inspired by the second reading from St. Paul, I presented religious life as a testimony to God's eternal love for humanity, to Christ's redemption, and to the eschatological transcendence to which religious life bears witness among humanity. After Mass, I shared some very pleasant moments with the community.

In the afternoon, at the parish of Carmen in Colonia Roma, the Carmelite Fathers prepared a beautiful group for the First Communion, which I had the pleasure of celebrating.

That evening, I received a visit from the vice president of the Vienna-based Movement for International Reconciliation. They had come to offer me their collaboration in promoting action in El Salvador focused on nonviolence, or more positively, justice and peace. I really liked their ideals, but I didn't feel capable of resolving them alone, so I requested another meeting with them the next evening, along with some advisors.

Monday, July 16, 1979.

Day of the Virgin of Carmen. My first mass was celebrated in the Church of La Merced, urging the historic brotherhood of Carmen, together with the pontifically crowned image, to maintain this tradition, but try to clothe it in a new spirit, the new spirit of the Church.

At nine o'clock in the morning, the solemn and traditional Mass was held at the Church of Carmen in Santa Tecla. The church was completely packed, and the theme of my homily was to present the Virgin as the "model of the Church," the reason for national religiosity, and the example of our union with God and our union with our neighbor. I emphasized that what hinders union with God is sin, and that every Christian must fight to the death against this reign of the devil and the slavery it brings. I also emphasized my commitment to humanity from God's perspective, but also to the point of being capable of giving my life for God and neighbor.

In the Church of the Concepción de Santa Tecla, we continue the tradition of confirmations on this feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel; but unlike previous years, we have obtained a very nice group of children over the age of eight, already conscious, so that, appropriately prepared by their parish priest and catechists, received theHoly Anointing within the Holy Mass.

Later that evening, Mass was celebrated at the Church of Carmen in Colonia Roma, followed by a beautiful procession with lamps reminiscent of the torchlight procession in Lourdes, singing the Ave Maria of Fatima, dedicated to Our Lady of Mount

Carmel. I congratulated the Carmelite Fathers and the faithful of that parish, reminding them that a people devoted to the Virgin cannot perish. We recited the Ave Maria, I gave them my blessing, and we returned home happy.

Tuesday, July 17, 1979.

All day in Tu meeting sure, Episcopal Conference of El Salvador. The agenda included the election of new officials, starting with the president, and the question of the seminary. I had already written a letter in which I referred to our disunity and implored that the elections be postponed and that, in their place,here we are dedicated to reflect on this situation which urgently requires the resolution of episcopal unity.

We spoke frankly about the many shortcomings of our hierarchy. We acknowledged our faults, but I am concerned about the radical attitude of some brother bishops toward my pastoral work. They are vilifying it with the desire to prevent its continuation.

It saddens me to think that they are not sensitive to the situation of the country and that Tato I would preferI feel comfortable with a pastoral approach, a preaching approach that doesn't purify, that doesn't aim to free our people from this terrible situation. We haven't been able to draw any conclusions, but we've talked at length, and I believe that "the earth has been turned upside down."

It will continue next August, when another meeting is scheduled.

In the evening, I met with the major and minor seminarians who had just concluded an integration meeting. I was pleased to hear the conclusions of their meeting and to sense the spirit of unity that motivates them to make the Archdiocesan Major and Minor Seminaries a unity in the ideal of the priesthood.

I also received a visit to the hospital from the acting rector of the National University, with whom we discussed the difficult problems facing this important cultural center.

Wednesday, July 18, 1979.

Today's first visitor arrives right around breakfast time. It's Father Rogelio Esquivel, who expresses his desire to work in this Archdiocese, since he considers it his own and there's no reason to go elsewhere. I frankly explained to him the pastoral approach we must follow here and that I didn't want to rush a decision. I simply told him I was happy to have him back and that we were willing to continue talking.

At eight o'clock we met with the Vicars of Mejicanos, Nejapa, and Aguilares, who had organized a day of prayer and reflection at the Cathedral on the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Father Rafael Palacios.

It urged to be very careful in everything that is said and that it would be better to have it in writing.

We have scheduled a concelebrated Mass at noon on the 20th, and from the morning of the 20th until noon on Saturday the 21st, various events and reflections will

take place; many of these programs will be broadcast on the radio. Also present were the Secretary of Social Communications, the director of the radio station, Father Pedraz, the Vicar General, Father Cortés, and the director of Social Communications as Advisory Council, Father Rafael Moreno. Everyone agreed on a worthy celebration to enhance and publicize the mission preached by our Church.

Among the highlights this morning was the speech by Mr. John McAward of Justice and Peace in the United States. It was an interesting conversation, in its desire to serve, from members of the U.S. Embassy and members of Justice and Peace to the human rights front in our Archdiocese.

Also present was Mr. Gabriel Delgado, formerly Brother Julio, who shared his impressions of the divisions among the bishops and the religious ignorance of the people. I asked for his cooperation, especially among the teachers, to encourage them to promote this Christian formation.

I agreed to provide him with a list of contacts and collaborators. Along the same lines, today the Federation of Catholic Schools introduced me to its new board of directors, and we discussed it, expressing our hope that Catholic schools will be true instruments of the Archdiocese's pastoral ministry.

Dr. Napoleón González, editor of the newspaper Crónica del Pueblo, which had just been burned down last Saturday, also came. I offered him words of encouragement and promised to start a collection to support his newspaper.

In the afternoon, a meeting was held with those responsible for the liturgy, audio, and other aspects of the event in preparation for the upcoming Feast of the Divine Savior.

The meeting was held at the Cathedral, and there was great enthusiasm to celebrate, as always, the Divine Savior of the World this year.

Later I went to visit the burned-out premises of the Crónica del Pueblo, but they were closed.

Thursday, July 19, 1979.

Today we had breakfast and collected the second draft of the pastoral letter. I was trying today, we are working to organize the various contributions into a single framework. We are also presenting the survey contributions, which are numerous and very valuable. This work was carried out by Father Fabián Amaya, and we have carefully analyzed it, presenting an overall assessment, just as the pastoral letter is presented. After reviewing some details, Father Fabián will gather all these opinions and produce a second, more coordinated version, enriched with the suggestions presented today.

In the Cathedral, starting at six in the morning, several vicariates have promoted a long day of prayer, forty hours that will continue until tomorrow at noon in memory of Father Rafael Palacios, who today celebrates 30 days since his tragic passing in Santa Tecla. At twelve o'clock concelebrated with almost all the priests of the archdiocese, but upon arrival the cathedral was surrounded by security forces...

Friday, July 20, 1979.

When we arrived at the Cathedral to concelebrate with all the priests, we were surprised to find ourselves surrounded by police and the National Guard. It seems a false alarm had been spread, claiming that the Cathedral had been occupied or that some political group was coming to take advantage of this prayer vigil. But, thank God, we managed to...concelebrate.

In my homily, I mentioned the prayer and reflection that were taking place, as if reflecting on the message of God's Word and taking advantage of the prayer of suffrage for Father Palacios. I also mentioned his charisma and the significance of his death, asking myself: "How could it have come to this crime of murdering priests?"

And he responded by analyzing a situation of injustice and sin that the priest must denounce, which means being ungrateful, being disliked by society, which, like Jerusalem, kills the prophets and those sent by them. The vigil continued throughout the afternoon and will continue throughout the evening, with great fervor from the communities that have come from various parts of the Archdiocese.

Father Luis, a young Belgian, has returned to the country and will work in Zacamil with Father Rogelio. He was very happy to be here in these circumstances, in the Cathedral. I also greeted Father Juan Macho Merino, who was Vicar of Pastoral during my time in the Diocese of Santiago de María. He is a Passionist who is returning from Spain and has brought with him the task of establishing a house here to nurture their young vocations.

I offered him several options and told him I would gladly accept whatever he chose. The Convent of San Francisco in Mejicanos; or Apulo, the "Santa Teresita" house;

or the parish of Guazapa. These three options are currently available, and there would still be the option to change if any of the proposed houses didn't meet the requirements.

Saturday, July 21, 1979.

As promised, today I completed my visit to the town of San Miguel de Mercedes, in the state of Chalatenango. Father Fabián and I arrived in Chalatenango and learned that at the entrance to San Miguel there were checkpoints on both sides to prevent people from reaching the meeting we were having in that town.

Indeed, upon arriving in Mercedes, a group of soldiers stopped us, made us get out of the car, and searched us, perhaps thinking we had weapons. We saw that there were many people detained there, whom we greeted and with whom we intended to begin the journey on foot to the nearby town. However, the commander of that platoon told me they couldn't proceed and that I had to leave by car, as it was an order from above.

I commented that this was an irrational order, since these were peaceful people, mostly women, who had come to fulfill a desire of their faith. But reason has no place with these people, and I was very sorry to leave them, express my solidarity with them, and ask them for current to pray together, they were there and I was in the Church, and I continued.

A few steps away, a large group of residents, including some who had managed to get into town despite the checkpoints, was waiting for me, as they called it. I headed with them to the church, which was almost full. There, they told me the other entrance was busier, mostly from San Antonio Los Ranchos. I let them know to come back and that,

once my duties in San Miguel were complete, I would go to San Antonio to thank them for their visit and chat with them.

We celebrated Mass. The mayor was present; there is no agreement with these interventions that ruin the tranquility of the city and its people.

In my homily, I described the nature and mission of the Church; the role of the Bishop, who must visit the communities; the function of the larger communities as benefactors of the people; and I regret, therefore, that this mission of building a true community is so hindered, even by violation of the faith. Already the freedom to believe.

After Mass, I met with the pastoral workers: nuns, priests, and, above all, many catechists from various cantons and the city of San Miguel, with whom we shared pastoral concerns and a very generous spirit on their part to continue their work. I was happy to see how the nuns of La Asunción, who they worked together with Father Fabián Amaya, from Chalatenango, made enthusiasm blossom in the young people.

And we shared lunch with them. There was joy in the convent, and as I said goodbye, I felt that hint of nostalgia that these circumstances bring, despite the ordeal we've all endured, but which we overcame.with joy Cristiano.

After lunch, I headed to San Antonio Los Ranchos, and sure enough, at the Chapel of the Cross there were nearly a hundred people who hadn't been able to get in due to the checkpoint. But there we met, prayed, sang, and talked: a fruitful exchange of questions, answers, initiatives, suggestions-in short, an atmosphere of family, joy, faith, and hope. I left them a small prayer card of Pope John Paul II as a memento, saying it was for them; I had reserved it and hadn't given it to San Miguel.

I am committed to a more specific date for San Antonio Los Ranchos, which will be in August.

Upon my return home, I came across two sad cases of repression. A mother, a father, and some brothers ofThe UnionThey came to tell me of their regret for the loss of a young member of their family, captured by Pasaquina and of whom there has been no news, despite the passage of several days.

The other case involves a man who owns a printing press in San Salvador; he was also captured, but his whereabouts are still unknown. Finally, the parish priest of El Calvario, Father Federico Sanggiano, told me that the church is occupied by the FAPU, specifically to demand his capture.

Sunday, July 22, 1979.

At the eight o'clock Mass, I began my homily with a greeting to Nicaragua, which this week marked the beginning of its liberation with the overthrow of General Anastasio Somoza's regime and the installation of the new governing council. We prayed for the country and reflected, drawing conclusions from this event.

The theme of the homily is suggested by the biblical readings: shepherds. Jeremiah refers specifically to rulers, but the Church also applies it to bishops and all those who are pastoral agents or participate in governments. We reflect on the difficulties of poorly governed peoples, on the distinction between good and false shepherds, and on how

Christ is the true Shepherd-King, presented in Sacred Scripture, in whom we place our hope in the difficulties of all peoples.

After Mass, there was an interesting conversation with the young people of the Quezaltepeque choir, who attended today's Mass. Also present was a representative of the parish of Santa Lucía de Ilopango, who wished to coordinate their efforts with the Curia to see how to secure the return of Father Astor Ruiz, who was expelled from the country when he attempted to enter from Colombia and sent to Guatemala the day before yesterday. I told them that I had already spoken with the Father and that tomorrow, Monday, we would have a meeting to discuss the case further. And that same evening, I would go to Santa Lucía to celebrate the 7:00 a.m. Mass for them and speak with the community, which was greatly appreciated.

After the Mass, there were other very interesting visits, and it was a very nice meeting with the people, especially those who attend Mass in the Cathedral.

In the evening, I celebrated Mass at Santa Lucia, and afterward, they introduced me to their activities. It's truly a parish where the Christian community lives a vibrant life. A catechist explained the work they do with children; a young man explained their work with young people; and a woman explained their work with adults. Afterward, we discussed the matter of Father Astor. They suggested writing a public and open letter, but I told them it was best to wait for the resolutions to be passed by the Presbyteral Council and that they could send a representative to discuss the matter.

Monday, July 23, 1979.

Today we met with Father Cortés, Vicar General; Father Brito, Chancellor; and Father Villarán, Vicar of Ilopango, to whom the parish of Santa Lucía, Father Astor's parish, belongs.

A lay representative of the parish and Father Moreno were also present. Our recommendation was to first request a meeting with the Minister of the Interior to find out the reasons for the Father's expulsion.

Then, visit Father Astor to assess his state of mind; he seems to foresee further dangers and perhaps still does not wish to enter the country. After that, appropriate measures will be taken publicly, both at home and abroad; for these abuses are worth saying something about.

I had lunch with the minor seminarians of Chalatenango, with whom I had a very interesting conversation. They are young men eager to deepen their vocation and the challenges each man faces in embracing the priesthood. I had a very positive impression of that young community: recently ordained priests like Rafael Urrutia and Ezequiel Gámez; a deacon about to be ordained, Jaime Paredes; a seminarian already studying theology, Joaquín; and some nuns from La Asunción, also young, but with a strong sense of pastoral ministry and team spirit. This youthful spirit of the seminary is growing in this environment; I believe it is very promising.

Upon my return, Father Brito informed me that Father Cortés had spoken at length with the Minister of the Interior, who seemed surprised, knowing nothing of what had happened to Father Astor. He promised to inquire and inform him the next day. The trip to Guatemala was also postponed.

Tuesday, July 24, 1979.

The first visit of the day is from Father Walter Guerra, who asks me to intervene in the bra strike, where workers are holding a group of managers hostage. The General Manager, however, refuses to intervene, fearing he himself will be held hostage. However, they are willing to accommodate most of the workers' demands.

Father Walter promised me that he would arrive. The employers would speak to me, and from there I would call the strike leaders to intervene. I gladly offered to do so, but, having set a time and being willing to intervene, Father Walter himself told me it was no longer necessary and that everything was now on track for a resolution, thank God!

I had a Tuesday meeting with the Executive Council of the Diocesan Curia. We specifically discussed the printing issue, which is also being resolved. There are many apprentices, and more qualified workers are needed to manage a printing press that is already in its infancy.modernize; but at the same time, justice will be taken into account with regard to the unemployment of these apprentices.

We also discussed Radio Ysax. A solution will be found based on the suggestions of the current director, Father Pedraz. To resolve this issue, a committee was appointed consisting of the current director, Father Pedraz; Engineer Galván, administrator of the Curia; and Father Fabián Amaya. Other aspects of the administration of our Archdiocese were also discussed.

Everything seems to be going well heading towards coordination that yields greater results. For her part, Coralia Godoy and the secretaries are also better organized in their

secretarial services; likewise, the administrator of the Colegio de La Sagrada Familia, Elizabeth Arias, is helping me organize the material aspects of the Curia office. I therefore thank the Lord that all this is contributing to the better functioning of this central office of Diocesan Pastoral.

We discussed pastoral matters all morning with the Pastoral Commission, which was supposed to meet today. This pastoral coordination appears to be progressing very well, as the office is already operational. However, Father Astor, currently expelled from the country, will not be able to lead it. Father Octavio Cruz, who spoke with him and who has a strong pastoral sense, will be in charge of this office, along with Piquín, who has also proven to be a good lay administrator of the lay part of the Pastoral Office.

In this rather lengthy meeting, we assessed the vigil in the Cathedral, frankly noting its negative aspects and the prevalence of positive values; above all, the growing awareness among communities of the need to defend their priests, given that the occasion coincided with the thirtieth day since the death of Father Palacios. I made very urgent recommendations to them to take advantage of these circumstances to clearly express the Church's mind. A Church that no one should manipulate for other purposes.

In the afternoon I went to celebrate a family Mass in Apopa, where I greeted a beautiful community gathered there and shared dinner with my family.

Wednesday, July 25, 1979.

Feast of St. James the Apostle. I celebrated Mass in honor of St. James the Apostle in the ancient parish of Aculhuaca.

I expressed my enthusiasm for celebrating in a church that unites the ancient indigenous civilization with the Christian civilization brought by Spanish missionaries. I spoke of the need to preserve the spirit of Santiago in these times of persecution for the Church. After Mass, I shared some very pleasant moments with the community, especially with the priests of that city: Father Crespín, parish priest of Santiago Aculhuaca; Father Nicolás González, of Paleca; and Father Gutiérrez, of San Sebastián; all three from Ciudad Delgado.

Upon my return, I was surprised to discover that the workers at the Criterio printing plant were on strike that day, demanding a pay raise and other benefits. But, thank God, the administrator of the Curia, along with the Vicar General and the Secretary of Social Communications, and Father Pedraz, the printing plant administrator, made some initial interventions, and I spoke with them before attending the promised meeting with the strikers. A renewal plan was proposed, since most of the workers are apprentices. Therefore, a group of competent workers will be hired, and the dissatisfied ones will be laid off with severance packages.

But by proposing this solution, the representatives of the group have a truce declared for tomorrow to propose to the plenary and bring their resolutions. I hope the situation doesn't get complicated for us.

In the evening he visited Dr. Semsch, who was very encouraging during the presentation of the Archbishop and the Archdiocese.

I have received a lot of correspondence and am working on several issues late into the night.

Thursday, July 26, 1979.

This morning's main concern is the strike at the Criterio printing company. My two secretaries came to breakfast to express the same concern, because they saw that it was being handled in a very corporate and unchristian manner. I pointed out to them that there was a business and commercial aspect that needed to be respected, and I also asked them to inspire that Christian spirit in the young people on strike, so that they too would join in.to the procedureChristianly.

I myself spent some time with the three representatives of the strikers to show them, from my pastoral point of view, without entering into the field of work, that the administrative part is taking care of it, that the procedure rationallyAnd, above all, in a Christian spirit, and that they could count on my friendship in whatever decision they made. They thanked me, but it seems their primary stance is to remain within the legal framework, threatening to contact the Ministry and take further action.

I've communicated this to the administration so they can take it into account, as it seems they'll be meeting again this afternoon to resolve the issue.

Among the morning visits, I had the pleasure of greeting an old acquaintance from my hometown, whom I had known since childhood. Mrs. Susana Castro encouraged me to continue on the path I had undertaken, even though she, along with other old friends I had lost, understood my dissatisfaction with the evangelical demands of our Church. I thanked her for her words of encouragement and asked her to pray for me.

Trejo's father and sister, currently in Venezuela, also came to ask for an extension. I informed them of the need for priests and that it would not be very priestly to remain outside the country, where there is such an urgent need. But I would discuss the matter with the Presbytery and the Presbyteral Senate. They should submit the written request submitted by Father Trejo himself for consideration.

A journalist also arrived, and we spoke with him about the situation and the Church's mission in this country. Members of the San Francisco Mexicanos community also came. Share your thoughts. Concerns pastoral care that seems to me very much in line with the initiatives of our archdiocesan pastoral care.

That evening, I met with the Archdiocesan Caritas Commission, where we primarily discussed the construction of the Archdiocesan Caritas winery, the financial situation, and the new programs being launched; we also discussed the positive impression this new approach to managing Caritas is making. I encouraged them not to lose heart and, despite the difficulties, to continue our work as a true school of charity.

Friday, July 27, 1979.

For the second time, Father Rogelio Esquivel visited me and told me that I had the opportunity to go and serve in Guatemala in Monsignor Ham's parish, since he will be going to the United States for a while. He wants to be considered byI, still a priest of this Archdiocese, explained to him the difficulties he has with the clergy and that I tried to take advantage of this stay in Guatemala to cultivate friendships...

Today's first visitor was Father Rogelio Esquivel, who wishes to consider himself permanently incardinated in this Diocese and currently has the opportunity to travel to Guatemala to spend a period at the parish of Monsignor Ham before moving to the United States. I gave him my affirmative opinion and asked him to take advantage of his stay in Guatemala to cultivate friendships with the Salvadoran priests, since, at the end of that period, he could return fully to our presbyterate.

The situation at the striking printing press remains unchanged. Today, some interviews with Curia employees are becoming more complex; they seem to fully support the young people striking at Criterio Printing Press. The Curia's Board of Directors has held meetings with the Archbishop's Office employees to explain the situation at the printing press, which seems very fair; however, they consider the solution of dismissing the apprentice printers to be unchristian. They have agreed to continue discussing these points.

That night, a confidential visit by an army major revealed corruption within the high command and the existence of a group of healthy soldiers who wish to fulfill their military calling. I encouraged him to maintain his integrity in the army, rather than retire as he wishes, because he feels he cannot fully develop as a man in the situations a soldier faces today, amid so much injustice and theft perpetrated by high-ranking soldiers themselves.

Many are honestly committed to the military, though they don't take advantage of their circumstances like others do. I congratulated him and encouraged him to continue living and be the leaven for his dough.

CHAPTER 18.

Year 1979.

Diary from July 28th to August 26th.

1979.

Saturday, July 28, 1979.

In the Saturday morning meeting we clarified the situation of the Criterio printing house a little, in order to make some decisions that will be directed to the solution to the problem that had arisen. Bachelor Roberto Cuéllar, who had already been informed of the situation, offered us some solutions and took charge of implementing them. But unfortunately, although everything seemed to be resolved, the strikers, using a delaying tactic, declared it best to leave the final decision until Monday.

In the afternoon, at Don Bosco School, I administered Confirmation, during a splendid Eucharistic liturgy, to a group of young students from the same school. The church was packed with the confirmed students themselves, along with their parents and godparents. It was a true catechesis on this great sacrament, which, thank God, is acquiring the importance our pastoral ministry desires to attribute to it.

Sunday, July 29, 1979.

In this morning's homily I recalled the fifty years of priestly life of Father Santiago Garrido.

The homily has had the opportunity to present Christ as the solution to all problems, provided we human beings cooperate. And there was also the opportunity to make many important denunciations of the numerous abuses committed in the country. After the Mass, where German television was present to cover the events in our Cathedral, the same television station requested an audience with me, along with other Italian journalists. The audience took place in the Cathedral convent, with questions on the situation and the prospects the Church sees in this country.

In the afternoon, a marriage counseling group met at the Ricaldone Institute. I concluded by addressing them about three topics they had been reflecting on in their groups: parental responsibility; communication with children; and Christian life at home.

Monday, July 30, 1979.

This morning, a refugee in the Archbishop's Palace, persecuted to death, thanked me because he was about to leave. But first, he wanted to leave a testimony of the cruel persecution and torture he had been subjected to during his far-left political struggles. But what was done to him is a sign of the terrible… lack of compared to man in our country.

There were other very important interviews, including two American journalists. One of them is connected to Georgetown University, which sent me its greetings after awarding me an honorary degree. The topic was very important because the journalists were very intelligent.

And in the evening we celebrated Mass on the fortieth anniversary of Father Palacios's death in the church of El Calvario de Santa Tecla, which was intended to atone for the murder of this priest.

We reviewed the draft of the pastoral letter with Father Rafael Moreno and Father Fabián Amaya, and it's already taking shape quite well. I received a letter from Father Astor Ruiz, a very Christian, very priestly man, in which he expressed his deep sorrow at being unexpectedly expelled from his country. But I'm happy with the great priestly spirit. which is offering this proof to the Lord.

Tuesday, July 31, 1979.

Among the morning visits, noteworthy was that of Dr. Morales Erlich, exiled in Costa Rica and vice-presidential candidate in the last elections, which ended the exile of Colonel Claramount and Vice President Dr. Morales Erlich. Both belong to the Christian Democratic Party.

He came to greet me along with another party member, David Trejo, and offered to collaborate with the Church, as a self-proclaimed Christian. I thanked him and told him that the Church often took a secondary role in defending human rights and the Gospel-many things political parties should do-and that I hoped he would return to El Salvador. It would mean taking onThis responsibility. He remains very optimistic, despite the country's significant political difficulties.

I also gave an interview with a Costa Rican radio station, My Message, which focused primarily on the example of Nicaragua. I've always held a pastoral and evangelical perspective, avoiding politically charged responses.

At noon I went to concelebrate with the Jesuit Fathers, homage of the FatherSantiago Garrido, who celebrated fifty years of priesthood last Sunday.

Wednesday, August 1, 1979.

Today I had a very interesting meeting with all the Curia staff to evaluate the events at the Criterio Printing House, as a letter was signed by the Curia employees. I attempted to explain the administrative procedures and also ask them about the hierarchical loyalty that a diocesan Curia requires toward its bishop, since we form a team that governs the entire Archdiocese and must be a good example of solidarity. There were very interesting and sincere discussions, and I believe the outcome was very positive in the pursuit of ever closer solidarity and faithful service to the hierarchical Church.

Father Octavio Cruz, who will be in charge of the pastoral office, was present. I spoke with him privately, and he has very balanced criteria for making our pastoral ministry what I've always dreamed of: a contemporary Church approach, free from extremism and capable of understanding the current situation in our country. I believe we have a priest at the head of the Pastoral Commission who will bear much fruit, God willing.

I celebrated the Holy Hour at the Divine Providence Hospital and took the opportunity to explore the theme of liberation, from the perspective of liberation from sin and the promotion of humanity to the heights of God. Then two journalists spoke, one Brazilian from El Globo and the other Venezuelan. It was a very interesting interview, because they are two very intelligent journalists who seek to analyze the role of the Church in El Salvador.

Thursday, August 2, 1979.

I updated the Chancellor on a series of letters and commitments. The rector of the Cathedral informed me yesterday afternoon that the Cathedral is occupied by the Popular Leagues of February 28th. A new organization is therefore demanding the release of some captured and missing members.

In the afternoon, Father Pedraz informed me that a representative of that group wanted to speak with me, and I told him I was at his disposal and interested in negotiating the Cathedral issue because I didn't want that situation to arise on Sunday, August 5th, and especially on Monday, August 6th, preventing us from being in the place where the patronal feast of the Divine Savior is traditionally celebrated. He agreed to come tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

Another interesting interview was with Silvia, the private secretary, who expressed her deep regret over the outcome of the Criterio printing strike. She and her colleague, María Isabel, believe the situation was unfair, that more attention was paid to money and machinery than to people.

I tried to make her understand the impartiality with which these matters must be judged, and to also take into account the interests of the printing house, which does not neglect humanism but fulfills one of the bishop's most serious duties: caring for the Church's assets. I also promised to hold separate discussions with the dismissed employees to help them resolve their issues. They didn't wait for the resolution as expected, but preempted it with a strike, which also included language offensive to the hierarchy.

He also told me that all the Archbishop's employees had expressed their feelings, which seemed very exaggerated to me, and I continue to stand by my goal: if someone doesn't feel comfortable working in the Archbishop's Office, it's better to leave and look for a position where they feel more comfortable.

In any case, this and another very intimate conversation I had with Father Pedraz made me reflect on the fact that we should review the personnel we work with and try to introduce a mysticism in line with the thinking of the current Church, which is my greatest hope, and not in any way betray the principles I preach. Silvia also made me realize that there is a contradiction between what is preached and what is practiced. I prayed to God for enlightenment and guidance.road name always faithful to what I try to follow the Gospel.

In the evening, an American journalist representing three newspapers visited, along with a translator from the U.S. Embassy. We had a very interesting discussion about the Church's perspective on violence and the hope it seeks to instill in this situation in the country.

Friday, August 3, 1979.

I spent this day devoted exclusively to the study of the Pastoral Letter.

Saturday, August 4, 1979.

I was able to study the Pastoral Letter, just like yesterday. However, that evening I had a rather long interview with Father Moreno and the bachelor Cuéllar, who told me the news of the week, and we exchanged some comments on the latest developments in the country. It is a day, in San Esteban Catarina, Father Napoleón Alirio Macías, parish priest of that town, was shot dead.

In the afternoon, I went to learn firsthand about this tragic event, which had been brewing for some time. The Father mentioned the magistrates, a group of men who had stationed themselves in front of the church and had taken advantage of the Father's moment of solitude to enter and kill him, between the sacristy door and the main altar.

Sunday, August 5, 1979.

I dedicated a special thought to Father Macías during the Cathedral Mass. The choir, composed of about sixty voices, sang, a true celebration in the Cathedral. And at the time of the offering, they also offered the fruits of that community's fields, along with bread and wine. The people applauded this gesture of kindness and solidarity.

.

In the afternoon, the traditional "Descent" was very moving, with a float depicting a storm at sea and the words: "Lord, save us, we are losing!" I greeted the crowd, as the entire ceremony was broadcast on Radio Ysax, and there was an opportunity to convey a meaningful message during the two-hour procession.

Monday, August 6, 1979.

The mass concelebrated withAlmost all the priests of the diocese and a large representation of the communities, who animated the popular singing and filled the street in front of the Cathedral and much of the park, made it a truly patronal and popular Mass. The presence of the Lord was felt in our liturgy, and a joy founded on faith and Christian hope was evident. Instead of a homily, I presented the outline of the Fourth Pastoral Letter.

It was often interrupted by applause, as people expressed their solidarity with the theme of the Letter: "The Church's Mission in the Country's Current Crisis." "I hope," I told them at the end of the Mass, "that when you leave here, each of you will be a builder of that new civilization of love that our country so desperately needs." I greeted many people at the end of the Mass, people from many corners of the country, and their genuine warmth toward their pastor was evident.

In the afternoon,another great hypothesis!Perhaps the largest ever seen in the city of San Esteban Catarina, whose parish priest, Father Alirio Napoleón Macías, was murdered two days ago and was due to be buried in the parish church at four o'clock this afternoon.Preceded byMonsignor Rivera,Bishop of Santiago de María, in his capacity as a parishioner of that parish, since San Esteban Catarina is the hometown of Monsignor

Rivera and because the bishop of the diocese, Monsignor Aparicio, was not present, as he is in Mexico.

An immense procession of priests filled the park and the surrounding streets. Monsignor Rivera gave a deeply inspired homily, affirming that so much suffering was necessary for so much redemption and that the deaths of so many priests already heralded the approaching hour of liberation. The crowd applauded several of his thoughts.

After Mass, a parade was held around the park, preventing the large crowd from moving. Only a small space along the road was left free for the priests' procession. About a hundred priests attended the funeral, and the body was then taken to the church, where it was buried. There was a moment of terror during Mass, when a false alarm went off and panic spread; several people fell on top of others, but, thank God, calm quickly returned and the service continued normally. The comments, both on the murder of the Father and its perpetrators, and, above all, on the very positive effects of this manifestation of faith, are a source of great hope for the Church.

Tuesday, August 7, 1979.

Meeting of the Executive Council of the Curia and several visits, although important but not exceptional.

Wednesday, August 8, 1979.

I toured the east to offer my condolences to the families of San Miguel, the Giralt family, and the Argüello family. I visited Miss Aurora Asturias, the young woman Angélica de Mena, and above all a humble but very affectionate couple, Don Luis Aparicio and Doña Avelina, very elderly, who have sanctified their pain and illness. She, after having her legs amputated, offers everything to the Lord in a hammock; he, also a very Christian, offers the pains of his old age for the Holy Church. At noon, I had lunch in Jucuapa with Dr. Jiménez Barrios, who had all the details, many events of his interesting life.

At night,axisI met with the seminarians to gauge their opinions on the death of Father Macías and also on the patronal celebrations of August 6th. These are extremely timely reflections that give me the pleasant impression of vocations to the priesthood maturing very well. I invited them to bring these same reflections to the priests' meeting, which is reflecting on the same topic, and to the Pastoral Council, where many of their initiatives could be incorporated into the patronal celebrations.

Thursday, August 9, 1979.

I spent most of the morning with a group of priests from various dioceses, preparing for the general assembly of the national clergy next Saturday. It was very gratifying to know that Bishop Barrera of Santa Ana would issue a statement of solidarity, and we of the Archdiocese joined in. We also received solidarity fromMonsignor Alvarez andMonsignor Rivera by phone. In this way, I believe the late Father Alirio Macías is realizing the great dream I prayed for: the unity of bishops and clergy.

We ask the Lord that this gesture of solidarity in the death of Father Macías may mark the beginning of a unity among all the episcopate and clergy, which will be so useful to the people of God in our homeland.

Friday, August 10, 1979.

At Belén School, we had breakfast to meet the other media collaborators; a new member was Mr. Munés, an advertising expert. During the day, there were several visits from priests and groups, and in the evening, an interview with a journalist.

Saturday, August 11, 1979.

Clergy representatives from across the country gathered in the Guadalupe Hall of the San José de la Montaña Seminary. Simultaneously, the Nuncio invited the bishops to the Nunciature. Both gathered to reflect on the death of Father Alirio Macías. While the priests' meeting was cordial and enthusiastic, in defense of the clergy and in solidarity with the Diocese of San Vicente, the bishops' meeting was sadly...

The bishops' meeting at the Nunciature confirmed the existing division between us. The only thing agreed upon was to officially denounce the murder of Father Macías. The Nuncio even offered to support this accusation during his subsequent visit to the President of the Republic. But when it came to examining the causes, the meeting was tainted by prejudices about Marxist infiltration in the Church, and it was not possible to dispel all these prejudices, despite my attempts to explain that the persecution of many

priests stems from their desire to be faithful to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, translated to Latin America by Medellín and Puebla.

This is little understood, and instead, blame is placed on the exploitation of Marxism, which the Church, they claim, is serving. I offered this test of patience to God, since I was largely held responsible for the evil that was happening in the country and in our Church.

I ended the meeting early because I had to leave for San Antonio Los Ranchos, where I had promised to be and, although I had postponed the meeting with those good people.In theIn the afternoon there was a very large turnout.

We celebrated Mass and shared a beautiful Christian communion that made up for my disappointments that morning.

Sunday, August 12, 1979.

Mass could not be celebrated in the Cathedral because it was occupied by striking workers, and we had to hold it in the Church of the Rosary. The homily, which commented on the sixth chapter of St. John, gave me the opportunity to present the flesh that Christ offers as the sanctification of human flesh and what human flesh is when it is not nourished by Christ. At noon, I had lunch with my brothers, who were kind enough to celebrate my birthday early.

Monday, August 13, 1979.

Nothing special, as the office received many visitors, but of an ordinary nature.

Tuesday, August 14, 1979.

At Santa Tecla, at the Carmelite house, we held a meeting of the Presbyteral Senate, where we primarily addressed the problem of disunity among the bishops. A commission of priests will convene representatives of the clergy from other dioceses to address this issue directly with the bishops.

We also sought to clarify the accusation leveled by Archbishop Aparicio against our Archdiocese of having offended his Vicar during Father Macías's funeral. We called upon the testimony of all those present, who were able to attest that this was false and the fruit of Archbishop Fredy Delgado's resentment.

The Commission for the coordination of the agreements reached at the meeting of the clergy and religious informed me that they had postponed the commitment too fast. Of a group of priests and nuns due to the lack of solidarity from all the dioceses and the belief that it was premature. It will be postponed and greater solidarity from the priests will be sought to implement an action that achieves the established objectives.

The Curia staff then offered me their birthday gift, which took place with great pleasure in the meeting room.

That evening other journalists were interviewing me at Divine Providence Hospital.

Wednesday, August 15, 1979.

The seminary students surprised me with a beautiful serenade. Then we went to celebrate Mass and have breakfast, and we visited the sickrooms. They were very joyful, very Christian and charitable hours; but at nine o'clock I had to go to celebrate the patronal Mass in Mejicanos, where the Assumption is the patron saint. Father Orellana had prepared a group of confirmands who performed excellently at the patronal Mass. And I had lunch with the parish priests of the vicariate of Mejicanos, with whom we discussed very interesting topics regarding our pastoral ministry, especially the basic ecclesial communities.

At seven o'clock that evening, in the Church of San Giuseppe della Montagna, the seminarians had prepared a Mass with the participation of numerous priests, nuns, and faithful. It was truly a tribute that filled my heart. Before my homily, Father Cortés presented this tribute as the best gift the priests and the people of God could give me for my birthday.

After the mass, a young member of the Ecumenical Christian Student Movement delivered a letter of solidarity with my nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, asking everyone to sign the petition. Amid applause, they expressed their willingness to sign, which they then signed as they left the church.

After the Mass, there was also a meeting with the seminarians and other communities, which was also very joyful and friendly.

Thursday, August 16, 1979.

At eight in the morning, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, the faculty and students of the Marie Paul School paid me a very affectionate tribute.

At eleven o'clock, I celebrated Mass in Chalatenango with the communities of the central headquarters of that vicariate, the seminarians, all the priests and nuns. But before arriving at Mass, an army checkpoint made me get out of the car and examined me like any other suspect, and it was clear they were eager to show off their arrogance in front of the church. During Mass, there was also close military surveillance, may God forgive them!

At seven o'clock in the evening, the patronal Mass of San Giacinto was celebrated in the neighborhood of the same name, which is cared for by the Pauline Fathers. This too was a very cordial ceremony.

Friday, August 17, 1979.

The meeting of the bishops had been called for this day; I was present at that moment, but Monsignor Aparicio had convinced the other bishops that they should suspend this meeting for fear that the priests who were meeting would force dialogue with the bishops.

Although Monsignor Rivera and I were against suspending the meeting and continuing it normally, the opinion prevailed to withdraw, even though the priests had no such intention.

At twelve o'clock a nun from the United States came to introduce me to greetings from his congregation, also bringing greetings from some bishops, especially those who work with the Latins, expressing my feeling of solidarity from all the beloved Churches of North America.

At six o'clock in the evening I had dinner with the third-year seminarians, and I will try to cultivate this intimacy even more, because they will soon be our priests.

Saturday, August 18, 1979.

Today, a group of priests, nuns, and Christian communities began three days of prayer and fasting at the Church of the Rosary. They explained their goals to me, and I respected their initiative, recommending utmost caution so as not to jeopardize the Archdiocese. The Coordination and Information Committee informed me, and I believe this is a priestly ecclesial initiative; the spiritual value of prayer and fasting will prevail and translate into a prophetic denunciation, as they claim, to stem this wave of crimes and abuses of which priests themselves have been victims.

I had to go to Usulután to preside over the graduating class of the Usulután Technological Institute, since the class had been named after me, and out of gratitude, I

went to be with them. I presided over the Te Deum in the church and the cultural event where they graduated, at the Alameda Theater.

I expressed my gratitude and offered a few words of guidance and encouragement to the young people who, with their high school diplomas, represent another hope for our country. I visited the Franciscan nuns, who were very kind. I accompanied them to that city and am pleased with how they have developed in their school, Colegio San Agustín, and in other pastoral projects in the city and surrounding towns.

I went to lunch in Santa Elena, where the parish priest, Father Rodas, is my seminary classmate, and where Monsignor Rivera was present, since it was the town's patron saint's day. Several priests were there, with whom I shared a cordial lunch.

I returned to celebrate the mass of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, in the novena of Sister Maria Mercedes, who died nine days ago.

Sunday, August 19, 1979.

While the Cathedral remains occupied by hunger-striking workers, I celebrated Mass for the second time in the Church of the Rosary. The priests, who yesterday began their three days of prayer and fasting, asked if they could concelebrate with me, and I gladly did so. During the homily, I even explained to the faithful the presence of so many priests and asked one of them to explain the purpose of that prayer and fast. I clarified, so that people would not be confused, that this was not an occupation of the church or a hunger strike, but rather an ecclesial act, which I do not believe should be prohibited.

It's an action that, with the strength of Christianity, prayer, and fasting, and its goals seem sound to me, since it seeks greater unity within the Church, especially within its hierarchy. And, at the same time, it cries out on behalf of the people who are hungry in the face of so much injustice with which they are trampled. Father Moreno explained the goal after my homily, and it seemed to me the idea was very clear. Even after the Mass, many of the participants at the mass showed solidarity with that group throughout the day.

After Mass, I went to the canton of Los Sitios, to Dulce Nombre de María, where the corn festival was being celebrated.

A military checkpoint at the entrance to the city conducted the usual search, ignoring the presence of the Archbishop, who was visiting the city and was assigned to him for ministry reasons. They were so suspicious that they inspected everything in the car. May God forgive them and enlighten them!

The event was extremely pleasant, even though we celebrated Holy Mass under a scorching sun. I preached to them about the bread of life, to which the bread of the earth must be elevated. The tortilla made with our corn; and that we should give thanks to God, but that we had raised God, all these gifts he gives us. I invoked the civilization of love. The National Guard, arriving while Mass was being celebrated, attended the homily and kept watch over the group, although there was no need to give it that military appearance.

That evening, I had dinner with engineer Carlos García Prieto and his wife, Antonieta. It was a very interesting conversation, although it seemed very capitalist-oriented, with criticisms of the Church's current actions, but always respectfully.

Monday, August 20, 1979.

I celebrated Mass in the Church of San Antonio Abad, where this Mass culminates the patronal feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, which continues to this day. Several visitors attended the usual religious service in the Curia.

Tuesday, August 21, 1979.

Pastoral Commission. An interesting meeting chaired by Father Octavio Cruz, the new secretary of this Commission. I arrived at the end and was informed of the positive results.

There is a special record.

This morning I went to celebrate Mass at the Betania School, in Santa Tecla, for Sister Rosa, a little girl old lady, of the founders, who died yesterday. I preached on religion, on the religious witness of a baptism carried to its fullest extent, imploring that the baptism our people receive be taken more seriously, so as not to have a nation of pagans baptized.At that mass, I had the displeasure of meeting a woman who told me that I was no longer the same as before and that I had disappointed them.

I didn't want to comment on anything at all. And I understand that this slander is widespread among all those who don't want the Church interfering in their petty interests.

In the afternoon, we received a visit from Sister Paula, a Belgian Christian, who lovingly assisted us from that homeland and, I hope, will help us with the proposal I made to her to build the bishop's residence. I also received a visit from Mr. Carlos Borgonovo and the rector of the University to discuss the country's current situation and to explore together the paths we can take toward our beloved homeland, so bloodied and so afflicted.

I told them that this simple gesture of care and unity was already a sign of hope and that we should continue searching; that I couldn't shed light on the technical aspect, but that, as a pastor, I would encourage hope and encourage experts to contribute their knowledge and experience.

It is possible that some of these consultative meetings will be held at the university.

Wednesday, August 22, 1979.

It was a busy morning at the Archbishop's Palace, with many visitors. But I primarily had to attend the meeting I promised you with the Board of Directors, where we evaluated the excellent work this Board has done in advising the Archbishop on the administration of the patrimony.

I acknowledged some of my shortcomings and promised to correct them and encourage them to continue working, since their Council is extremely useful for the administration of the Curia.

Visit of young people from Mexico, who were deeply impressed by the work done in our Archdiocese. Visitor representative of the Christian Democratic Party of Latin America, with whom we also spoke about the situation in the country, and he emphasized the good role that the Church is playing.

The closing Mass of the days of prayer and fasting was held at El Rosario. I sought advice from the Presbyteral Senate, which advised me not to attend, as it was a controversial event and my participation could influence, rather than unite, the clergy of the Archdiocese.

Thursday, August 23, 1979.

An interesting assessment was made by the priests present at the dialogue with the Christian Democrats and Salvadoran business leaders, including Father Estrada, Monsignor Urioste, Father Jesús Delgado, and Father Cortés. In summary, the various meetings were marked by progress in mutual understanding, with the Church having the opportunity to clarify several misunderstandings and a positive step toward greater understanding and broader horizons for resolving our country's crisis.

Meeting with the new managers of Radio Ysax and the Criterio printing company, along with the Administrator, the Vicar General, and other media representatives. The care and enthusiasm with which they are working to spread the ideas of the Archbishopric are very impressive. Several shortcomings were highlighted. Some improvements were suggested that will improve the dissemination of our ideas.

In the afternoon, journalists and television crews visited the Divine Providence Hospital. At seven o'clock in the evening, we met with the seminarians of the Archdiocese, where we discussed the conflict with the seminary team regarding the fact that several students from the Maggiore had gone to participate in the days of fasting and prayer without the assistance of the team. Naturally, they were urged to apologize and to reconcile through dialogue.no longer taking action on their own initiative.

Friday, August 24, 1979.

Today I went to celebrate the patronal feast of Arcatao, in honor of St. Bartholomew the Apostle. The journey was very picturesque, but the road was quite bumpy due to the storm that raged this morning. At the Sumpul River, we were met by a checkpoint composed of Chalatenango troops and National Police officers. They let us disembark. The priests of Chalatenango, some nuns, and I were with us. They held us for a while; we were patient and, after the search, we continued on.

Upon arriving in the city of Arcatao, a large contingent of National Guard members stopped us again. For the first time, they forced me into the car and searched me. They searched everyone. I was with an American journalist from Boston, who noticed it and was alarmed, especially given the vulnerability of our people in the face of our country's armed forces.

After the search and seizure, which was witnessed by the sisters of Arcatao who were very close by, we continued towards the town that was already waiting for us andacclaimedWe enthusiastically welcomed our arrival and continued, accompanied by a large crowd of faithful, toward the church. One of the military leaders told me they had

orders to take care of me and that they would leave me alone, remaining there to keep vigil in the church. I replied that it wasn't necessary; I asked them to take care of the people and that a military presence in the church wasn't very honorable, given the situation in the country.

But we continued our march, and apparently they were initially in the church, although a nun later convinced them it was best not to go. And they continued making arrests elsewhere, which had already created some tension in the atmosphere.

But the Church was full of believers, and when I spoke to them about Saint Bartholomew, I said that he had been flayed precisely for his faithfulness to the Gospel and that God sometimes asked us to make sacrifices, to have serenity and courage, and to continue teaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

It was a lovely celebration; afterwards we went to the convent, where they performed a song with beautiful messages and where we chatted with some people.AlreadyLunchtime, with the catechists from the various cantons, who had a very interesting conversation with their parish priest. We returned home quite late, and Father Moreno and the nuns from the Hospital of Divine Providence took care of my evening duties.

Saturday, August 25, 1979.

I celebrated Mass in San Juan Opico for a wonderful group of young people preparing for Confirmation. Many children and young people from the nearby parish of Tacachico were present. It was a very lively Mass. The church was packed, and we gave

the liturgical significance all the importance it deserves on the occasion of a Confirmation.

After the Mass, attended by several priests from the vicariate, I spoke with a large group of catechists, true supporters of the parish priest. A group of confirmands, who had been delayed due to transportation issues, were confirmed in this parish hall, in another very moving ceremony for the catechists.

In the afternoon, I celebrated a family celebration at Salvadoran High School. A girl was turning fifteen, and her family was from my former diocese of Santiago de María.

Sunday, August 26, 1979.

Sunday Mass, well attended as usual, had to be celebrated in the Church of the Rosary, as the Cathedral was occupied by political groups. Several journalists and representatives of foreign television stations were present.

This afternoon I went to celebrate the second anniversary of the death of...

This afternoon I went to the canton of El Salitre, in the parish of Tejutla, in the department of Chalatenango. The second anniversary of the cruel murder of catechist Felipe de Jesús Chacón was being celebrated there. His face was deskinned and disappeared two years ago. An admirable man who left a wonderful testimony, lovingly collected by the Cursillos de Cristianidad, especially because, starting with a Christianity Course, he dedicated himself to working for the Kingdom of God in a very edifying way.

The Mass was very crowded, and we couldn't celebrate inside the church; we had to move the altar outside. I didn't have time to spend time with the newly arrived communities because I had another commitment in the community of La Palma, where the "La Semilla de Dios" cooperative was celebrating its second anniversary. It's a very important and unique social project because it has succeeded in raising the standards of that poor and defenseless region. It's picturesque. It's a regenerating experience. We celebrated Mass outdoors, and there was a great turnout. I tried to convey the message that work and prayer are human strength.

CHAPTER 19.

Year 1979.

Diary from August 27th to September 16th.

1979.

Monday, August 27, 1979.

The ladies of the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas hosted me for lunch, during which I also tried to leave a message of love, which the Church desperately needs today.

Tuesday, August 28, 1979.

The highlight of this very eventful morning at the Archbishop's Palace was our visit with Mr. Poma and Mr. De Sola. These two private business leaders are deeply concerned about the country's situation and wanted to share their views on this matter with me, since, in their view, the Church is the only moral voice capable of guiding the country.

I appreciated this appreciation, tried to listen to their opinions, and honestly expressed my own. While we don't agree on everything, I believe they accept the Gospel's stark demand: that true peace can only be achieved if true justice is served. And I forcefully emphasized the need to change the country's social, economic, and political structure. At the very least, let's make sure people see that this transformation is truly beginning; otherwise, we won't be able to stem this tide of violence.

In the afternoon we held a very important meeting at the house of the Passionist Sisters of Planes de Renderos to evaluate the outcome of these dialogues we had with business leaders, the Christian Democratic political party and other leading sectors of our society representing the Church: the Vicar General,MonsignorUrioste, Monsignor Cortez, Father Jesús Delgado and Father Estrada.

We evaluate theThe situation of the Church in this context, and frankly, it was like "taking a thermometer" for our Church and better orienting our pastoral work. We were unable to complete it and agreed to meet tomorrow at noon at the Hospital of Divine Providence.

At night,I had dinner withThe grassroots community group organized in Santa Tecla by Father Rafael Palacios. His memory filled everything with beautiful testimonies of a man who, secretly, was capable of doing so much good. For my part, I shared with them the relationship between the bishop and a priest, and in particular with Father Rafael, and how, through the priest, the bishop and the community are able to form a single spirit, a single family, which I implored them to continue to preserve in a truly communitarian and ecclesial sense.

Wednesday, August 29, 1979.

I was unable to go to San Juan Cojutepeque, where the patron saint's feast day is celebrated today.I participated with several journalists and representatives of foreign television in the Archbishop's Curia.

In the afternoon, a Franciscan priest from Gotera and a nun came. He is Irish and she is English, and they told me about their holiday trip to their country and how they managed to create a strong climate of solidarity with our country. Personally, they brought me very meaningful greetings and an invitation to come to Ireland, which I told them was very difficult given the situation and, above all, the language barrier, as I don't speak it perfectly. Another journalist was there that afternoon and evening. Although it tests my patience, I believe it is a wonderful opportunity to spread the Pastor's words and thoughts.

Thursday, August 30, 1979.

An important visit from the Central Contadina (Peasant Central). A group of farm workers expressed their desire to show solidarity with the Church and request specific collaboration. For my part, I offered them my appreciation.

Another very pleasant meeting was with the parish priests of the Mexican Vicariate. In the house of the Belgian nuns, adjacent to the Domus Mariae, we had a very friendly and intimate conversation about their relationship with the Bishop. I began by expressing my desire to listen, in all frankness, to their suggestions and even their complaints, in order to improve my relationship with them.

Secondly, their relationship with each other was extremely open. They exposed all their flaws and encouraged each other to cultivate their strengths, and their friendship was evidently strong. And finally, their relationships with the laity, which is where many psychological and pastoral difficulties arise, the atmosphere was extremely cordial and encouraging.

Friday, August 31, 1979.

This day celebrates the anniversary of the death of our remembered Monsignor Valladares, since Sunday I have asked for prayers for him, because I always feel him so close.

There have been several visits to the Archbishopric. The most notable was the Colonia Dolores Parish Commission, led by Mr. Tomás Sánchez Zelaya, an old friend. They are now ready to build the convent, having almost completed the church, and also to

continue with the construction of a parish school. I expressed my enthusiasm, and they are counting on their organization and your generous support.

I had lunch with Don Pepe Simán, who is about to leave for the United States. The warmth of this home, which offers me so much friendship, is also an oasis for me in my work.

I was unable to hold the meeting with the third-year seminarians, but we have rescheduled it for next Wednesday.

Saturday, September 1, 1979.

We celebrated our usual Holy Hour at Divine Providence Hospital, which was attended by many. The Letter of James, read this Sunday, offered me a wonderful opportunity to speak of the Father, especially of the splendor of the stars, from which all good comes, and invites us to intimacy with Him. During the Mass, there was a baptism, which I also used for catechesis on the baptismal commitment of Christians.

Sunday, September 2, 1979.

Father Manuel Loarca and the Daughters of Charity nuns who work in that area had invited me in advance to celebrate a Confirmation for the youth. The crowd was huge; there was no room in the church, so the ceremony had to be held in the nearby school. They were well prepared, and there was genuine youthful enthusiasm, given that

most of them were fifteen-year-olds. It was a precious offering, with baskets of local produce.

An atmosphere of cordiality and joy that makes us think about how beautiful a liturgy is when it has been truly understood by life.community that receive continued training by those pastoral workers, parish priests, nuns and many lay people, true catechists of serious commitment.

Monday, September 3, 1979.

The highlight of this day was my visit to La Chacra, an extremely poor region where the Sisters of the Assumption work. Swiss television wanted to take a look at the Church in all its aspects, and just as yesterday, along with other Mexican journalists at Ateos, today it covered various aspects of the miserable, yet joyful, and Christian life of this community in La Chacra. I visited small houses where the rain is dampening the walls and floors.

Many times the wall is the ravine that a person has leaned against technology of pond. The journalists were I'm going I'm goingI was deeply shocked by this situation of misery and human proliferation: there were many children coming from everywhere.

I concluded the day with dinner at the Carmelite Institute, invited and warmly welcomed by the postulants who will depart this week. I encouraged them to be faithful to their vocation, and in a joyful and friendly atmosphere, we also shared a very edifying moment in our lives.

Tuesday, September 4, 1979.

The clergy meeting, on the theme of "Base Communities" occupied the entire day. There was serious discussion of the article published by Father Luis Montesinos, in which he criticizes various aspects of the Archdiocese.

And I was very pleased to see the solidarity and unity of all the clergy with their Bishop, except for a few who, not because of a lack of communion, but because they disagree on many things, even have the frankness to express it. I said this at the end: that all these tensions, as long as they remained in communion, were a sign of health; that we had searched, nothing more, to make the supreme values of charity and unity prevail.

Wednesday, September 5, 1979.

I listened to a Swiss television recording in Arcatao in which some Order officials openly accused the nuns of fomenting subversion in various cantons. I already spoke of slander in Sunday's homily, and indeed it is, because these people have failed to understand what almost the entire city has understood: the evangelizing mission of these nuns, who are doing so much good in that region.

The Oblates of the Sacred Heart also came to care for the parish of Jayaque, since there is no priest there and they are very animated by the pastoral spirit.

A group of priests from various dioceses gathered in the parish hall of San José de la Montaña to evaluate their fasting and prayer activities at the Church of the Rosary.

Throughout this week, Swiss television has been with us, tasked with capturing aspects of the Archbishop's life. For this reason, we saw them perform at 8:00 a.m. Sunday Mass, at the clergy meeting, and in the offices of the Archbishop's Curia, as well as at the Divina Provvidenza Hospital, filming scenes of the dining room, the chapel, and the patients, to indicate the Archbishop's residence.

A Swedish journalist also attended the event, having heard the opinions of various sectors of national life and wishing to interview the archbishop about the pastoral aspect of this situation.

Thursday, September 6, 1979.

A morning of great activity, including visits, meetings and ending with lunch, Quell EroI was invited by the Fathers of Opus Dei. They told me about all their work among professionals, university students, but also among workers and servants. It is a silent and deeply spiritual work. After lunch, I had the opportunity to watch an Italian television program on the founder of Opus Dei, in which he emphasizes the values of prayer and the sanctification of the lay vocation. I believe that the holiness of lay people in their profession is a treasure for our Church.

In the afternoon, the Social Security nurses had asked me to celebrate Mass, which I gladly celebrated, to thank God for having satisfactorily resolved the problems of their just requests.rational peacefulAnd I told them that I hope all the country's conflicts will be resolved in this way and that one day we will give thanks to God not only for this

aspect of the economic and social problem they represented in Social Security, but also for the entire country and its various and complex problems.

.

I had dinner with the secretary of the Cursillos de Cristiandad. It was a family dinner, and I introduced a profoundly Christian and evangelical topic:the theme of unity; asking them to fraternally indicate which paths I could I will continue to seek unity with my dear brother bishops, because if I am the cause of any obstacle to this unity, I am willing to correct it. I was extremely pleased with the frankness with which they spoke to me, where the positive.

I have been told that unity must be based on the criteria of the Gospel, that unity is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and that the people often interpret this Spirit better than the hierarchy itself. According to these evangelical criteria and those of the Holy Spirit, there is no doubt that the line we have adopted in the Archbishopric is the work of God. And that, if they deviate from it, criticize it, or oppose it, we must not seek unity outside of this Spirit, but rather pray for the conversion of all. I too will seek to be faithful to the Spirit and the Gospel. Becoming each one still once to his inspirations.

Friday, September 7, 1979.

It was a tragic day. News spread of the assassination of the President's brother, a retired professor who lived in Apopa. The Secretary, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense, Colonel Iraheta, came to see me and told me that the President, the Minister of Defense, and other members of the government had spoken at the wake of the danger I was in and that they would offer me any security I desired, including an armored car.

I thanked him, sent my greetings to the President, expressing my condolences on his brother's death, and respectfully telling him that I did not accept such protection, since I was willing to take the same risks the people were taking; that it would be a discredit to my pastoral witness to be so confident while my people were so insecure.

I took the opportunity to ask him, instead, for protection for the population of certain areas where checkpoints and military operations cause so much devastation, or at least sow so much terror. I told him that I too had been subjected to these humiliations when, entering Arcatao, they raised their hands and searched me. He was surprised, apologized, and said that... I'd try to see.that many times the subjects go beyond the rules that have been given to them.

I also spoke at length with him about the apparent tolerance of certain crimes; I mentioned the undetected murders of our priests; at times, the suspension of these investigations seems deliberate. In short, it was a conversation I found fruitful, in the sense of respectfully denouncing those who can remedy them.

It's theFirst Friday and there were many communions. I went to confession in the church of Carmen with the Jesuit Fathers, where I saw how this is flourishing.devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

I had promised to go to Paisnal to celebrate Mass at Father Grande's tomb, as Swiss television also wanted to bring the memory of the tomb of the Father, who was the first to be implicated in this series of crimes against our clergy. But I was told that, given Apopa's crime, there were many operations underway and that I might run some risks, which wasn't worth it, as it wasn't a pastoral purpose, but rather a way to please television.

For this reason, we announced on the radio that the Mass would not be held and that next Sunday, when we will celebrate another Mass in the same area of Aguilares, we will visit the tomb of Padre Grande.

In the evening, a meeting was held with the Archbishop's senior seminarians. They reported on their meetings with the rector, Father Goyo, regarding fasting and prayer activities at the Church of the Rosary. These five meetings allowed them to evaluate and draw very positive conclusions, but at the same time, they highlighted some problems, which were precisely what we sought to discuss in this meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, two emissaries of North American ecumenism were present: he, a Methodist pastor, and she, a Brazilian who works for the Ecumenical Secretariat in the United States. They shared a warm moment with the seminarians and parted with a smile of deep satisfaction.

With the seminarians, we explored the theme of unity, mutual respect within the team, and the need for the Seminary to be a true center of unity for bishops, priests, and seminarians themselves. In short, I believe it was a very enriching meeting, during which I also began work to ensure that the Priests' Commission would take responsibility for more intensive work in the formation of our clergy and for good relations between the Archbishopric and the Seminary's team of formators.

Saturday, September 8, 1979.

I spent the evening preparing tomorrow's homily, following the information I received, as I do every Saturday, to complete the homily's informative and exhortative framework. The afternoon in the Chapel of Santa Luisa was also very beautiful, where, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Walter Deininger School, several sacraments were celebrated: baptism, confirmation, and the marriages of several couples.

A wonderful way to express how the school is a true pastoral splendor, when given the full sense of evangelization that a Catholic school should have.

Sunday, September 9, 1979.

For the second time, I had to celebrate Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, as the Cathedral and the Church of the Rosary were still occupied. The attendance seemed larger. Someone remarked on the immense number of people present at this Mass. A Methodist pastor from the United States and a secretary of the World Secretariat of Churches from that country were also present. The homily, inspired by the miracle of the healing of the deaf-mute, gave me the opportunity to present Christ as the True Liberator, who does not destroy, but recreates, and who projects all the dimensions of humanity, the transcendent and the...history-social.

After Mass, I presided over the solemn perpetual profession of a Passionist nun in the Church of the Concepción. It was a very beautiful ceremony and represented an invitation to all the baptized to live their baptism seriously, since religious profession is not a sacrament in itself, but baptism itself, celebrated with very serious and profound consequences. Sanctifying and of great cooperation for the Church.

After a frugal lunch at the Passionist house, I went to Aguilares, where we were to celebrate the ninth anniversary of the assassination of Jesús Jiménez, a great catechist, whom they call "the man of the Gospel."

In the afternoon, I went to Aguilares to celebrate the novena for the murder of catechist Jesús Jiménez, known as "the man of the Gospel" because, despite being illiterate, he carried with him his Bible notes, chosen for specific circumstances. He was very faithful to his role as community coordinator, and was mysteriously murdered.

His body was found already taken to the town hall, from where the women had to carry it to the canton where I celebrated Mass, a short distance from the parish church. The Mass was well attended by the communities promoted in all those places. Swiss television, which filmed this celebration, gave me its impressions, which were very pleasant and original.

After Mass, we went to visit Father Grande's tomb in Paisnal, where there was also a television set to capture some images of that place venerated by the Archdiocese. There was a great deal of fear in the air. People were watching from afar; they didn't come any closer. A certain ear, as we say, was very close, spying on what we were doing, and we could see the National Guard about half a block away, where they have their headquarters, also very worried.

In short, an anomalous situation, a psychosis that has arisen in all these places so tormented by repression.

Monday, September 10, 1979.

This morning I met with the Pro Seminary Council. Father Sigfredo, rector of the Minor Seminary, is responsible for the seminary's affairs, and I urged him to study, with the entire appointed and not yet operational commission, the delicate situation of the Interdiocesan Seminary in relation to the Archdiocese. This tension, especially among the bishops, has led to a split, as Archbishop Aparicio has withdrawn almost all the seminary students to Mexico, and the seminary team is also studying a series of problems it is encountering in its relationship with our Archdiocese.

There is discontent among the young men of the Major Seminary, and it is urgent to prevent an even greater disaster, the expulsion of several young men who could be highly esteemed priests. The entire issue has been discussed at length, and the need for dialogue with the seminary team has been recognized. To achieve this goal, however, we must better prepare the material, and we will meet to continue this dialogue next Friday.

I went to lunch at the Guadalupano School, where I met the Provincial, who is Salvadoran, and encouraged the nuns working in Arcatao, who have been practically expelled from there due to the government situation. I tried to explain to the Provincial this work of human development in that region, so misunderstood by many. Meanwhile, the nuns from Arcatao are helping me in the office.

That evening I went to the ultreya. The Cursillos de Cristiandad welcomed me warmly, and after my address to the entire group, I invited them to stay to discuss the urban pastoral project.

Some excellent suggestions emerged, but the main one was for short courses, having as their charism the Christian animation of environments, which would study the environments of the capital and the metropolitan area, to lay the foundations for the study of an appropriate pastoral care.

Tuesday, September 11, 1979.

At the Nuncio's request, I went to visit him. He was very cordial and told me that the main purpose of his visit was to convey the President's concern for my safety, that he saw many dangers and that he was offering me security. I repeated to the Nuncio what Colonel Iraheta had said, having also come on behalf of the President to offer the same security, that I was willing to take the same risks as the people and that it would be very difficult for me to present myself as protected while the people were suffering defenselessly.

And that we had faith in God that he would protect us.Mr. Nuncio referred to my homily last Sunday forgive me and tell me that I had spoken well and that he had understood that I was between two enemies, the right and the left, and that he had understood that the position was very delicate.

I thanked him for his differences IWe discussed other issues, such as the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, which urgently needs reorganization, and I asked him to intervene with the Episcopal Conference to make this department of the Church operational at the national level.

This morning, the Pastoral Commission held a very lively meeting. We reviewed the previous clergy meeting and discussed various pastoral issues with complete sincerity and openness. I spoke with Father Gámez, who is having problems in Chalatenango. The Catholic Relief Service also came to see me. in difficulty which exist with the Carmelite Congregation of Santa Tecla, due to the fact that the center which, with the help of this institution, operates there, is used for another purpose.

I promised to intervene to ensure justice was done and, above all, for the good of our pastoral ministry. He also offered me this North American institution, CRS, which was willing to help me with any issues the Church might face due to emergencies. I pointed out that we were experiencing an emergency, that there were many families of missing, murdered, and captured people who needed help. He agreed to establish a fund for this assistance and would be interested in further institutionalizing this way of doing good.

In the afternoon we had a meeting on social media. It was theSecretary, Miss Doris Osegueda; the radio station director; Father Moreno, head of the Council for Social Communications; the Vicar General, Monsignor Urioste; and Father Torruella. We also discussed various aspects of La Prensa radio and other complementary publications.

Also present was Father Fabián Amaya, who proposed programming that would undoubtedly improve the radio station's functioning for the benefit of pastoral work, catechesis, and liturgy, which are the objectives of our Church.

That night, a phone call to the hospital informed Mother Superior that they were coming for the ten thousand colones I had offered to kill someone. The Mother Superior was very alarmed and forced me to go to sleep elsewhere, even though I had told her,

"These are anonymous calls intended to spread psychosis; don't worry." Nevertheless, the alarm was raised, but it was all in vain.

Wednesday, September 12, 1979.

A morning filled with private visits, including an interview with Ysu radio, which will be broadcast on a Central American network, focused primarily on the situation of the Church amid the country's conflict.

I had lunch with Fathers Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, who had just returned from attending conferences and scientific meetings. Both they were referring to good TheThe reputation our Archdiocese enjoys in other circles. In Germany, Father Sobrino saw my homilies translated into German, and I spoke with Protestant pastors who pray fervently for the direction of our Archdiocese; they also promised me the prayers of thousands of their co-religionists.

Father Ellacuría gave me great encouragement when he spoke to me about the interview with Father Arrupe in Rome; and, at the same time, about Father Arrupe's interview with the Holy Father. The Pope specifically asked Father Arrupe about me, and Father Arrupe made complimentary comments about my pastoral work and preaching; this seems to have significantly influenced the Holy Father's judgment. Therefore, it was also clear that he was surprised when Father Arrupe informed him that six priests had been murdered in the country.

It seemed the Pope was not being provided with objective information on the situation of the Church in our country. Thank God, everything has been very positive for our Archdiocese in this relationship between the two Jesuits and Europe.

In the afternoon, a new interview on Swiss television, after having had a conversation with the President of the Republic, who said that I was preaching politics and that with this I was disobeying theConstitution, and that this was a sign of the freedom that exists in the country. I had the opportunity to explain on Swiss television that this is not a political sermon, but an evangelical sermon that illuminates politics, as the Council commands us when it recalls the Church's right and duty to illuminate, through Christian ethics, various human activities, including politics.

Another interesting interview this afternoon was with Mother Teresa Margarita, superior general of the Carmelites of San José, to recommend her not to take into consideration the aims of Cespro,A Carmelite convent in Santa Tecla; according to reports from the Catholic Relief Service, which has greatly assisted this organization, they are apparently planning to suspend the work of promoting women, which has done so much good, in order to dedicate this house to the purposes of the congregation.

Mother expressed surprise that these matters had come to light and stated that it would be a temporary suspension, with a return to their objectives later, as they lacked the necessary funds to continue the work. However, throughout her comment, I noted a fear of the Archbishop's stance, undoubtedly due to influences I suspect emanate from the Nunciature itself; and that this could have led Mother to withdraw from a work we all consider of great benefit to our pastoral ministry.

I agreed to speak with the Catholic Relief Service, who, in due course, promised to continue to assist me so that this project would not be suspended.

Thursday, September 13, 1979.

The morning newspapers, El Diario de Hoy and La Prensa, published a full-page report of Monsignor Aparicio's homily in San Vicente last Sunday. It is a terrifying condemnation of priests, whom he claims he cannot defend and almost accuses and exposes to murder. He claims that the murdered priests were purged by the left itself and that there are priests devoted to the left who cannot surrender without being killed. We met other priests deeply outraged by this dangerous accusation.

In Radio Ysax's commentary, the monsignor's attitude was harshly criticized, calling it anything but pastoral, and the priests committed to studying how to confront Monsignor Aparicio to make him understand the gravity of his accusation and, at the same time, express solidarity with the priests of that diocese.

We met with the Pastoral Steering Committee to speak primarily with Monsignor Urioste, who until now has served as Vicar for Pastoral Care, so that he could share his experience and assist us with the administrative aspects. He was very understanding and said he would leave everything in the hands of the committee and offered to continue providing all his services for the good of the Diocese. I made it clear that this new organization does not detract from Monsignor Urioste, since he is the Vicar General and as such is closely linked to the Bishop in overseeing all pastoral aspects of the Diocese.

Furthermore, he is Vicar for Administration, which is the sector in the current organization of Diocesan Pastoral. It is therefore the main pastoral commission to which the entire administration is subordinate. As Vicar General and Vicar for Administration, he is the best link between the pastoral life of the Archdiocese and the Pastoral Commission. He fully understands and is cordially involved in this new effort to establish a pastoral commission, calling the director of all this principal work of the Church of the Archdiocese.

At lunchtime, I was delighted to discover that the Guadalupana Sisters, who assist me in the Secretariat, were also taking care of the small kitchen and personal dining room. Here, in a very cordial community, we ate lunch and discussed the diocese's problems. It seemed to me, therefore, a moment of pastoral comfort, very beneficial for my life and that of the Curia.

In the afternoon, after resting, in my prepared room in the Curia, which I had almost never occupied, I met with the seminarians who had requested an audience with me. I also saw this as an added advantage in staying for lunch, allowing me to dedicate the early afternoon to this very useful task of personally guiding the seminarians.

There were four seminarians who had requested an audience and were having personal problems, and I realized how essential it is for the parish priest to get to know his seminarians more intimately. The day concluded with dinner at Mr. Viéytez's home, where we had very topical, experiential conversations about the world and politics.

Friday, September 14, 1979.

It's the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the Colegio de la Divina Providencia, run by the Passionist Sisters, is celebrating the College Mass today. It was held in the Church of the Concepción. I went to say it; I was told eternal rest was offered to José Mauricio Flores, an engineering student murdered yesterday and the son of a school teacher, Mr. Mauricio Flores.

During the Mass, I said that this murdered young man and his grieving family are symbolic of the many individuals and families suffering in this hour of suffering for the nation. And that this evoked the meaning of the Cross. Urged by to be faithful to one's duties, to serve one's country not by killing, but by giving one's life, doing one's duty well.

The Seminary Commission meets in the Archbishopric to study the conditions we would like to be carried out in a seminarian from our Archdiocese, who is preparing for our pastoral ministry. Father Fabián Amaya, Father Rafael Urrutia, and Sigfredo have prepared a splendid study based on Puebla and other reflections related to the seminary.

We have been asked to develop norms that will constitute our rationale for the institution, and we have prepared the dialogue that will take place with the seminary's team of formators, aiming for mutual understanding in the Archdiocese's relationship with the seminary team. This is a very delicate issue and must be addressed with courage, because the seminary is the hope of the Archdiocese.

I received a visit from an American journalist. I also attended the meeting held at the Divine Providence Hospital by the priests of the diocese of San Vicente. I offered them my support and availability, since their bishop, in his homily last Sunday, had

abandoned them and almost accused them of dangerous conduct, which was fiercely persecuted by the government.

I was unable to go to Cojutepeque for the confirmations that were supposed to take place this afternoon because there were many disturbances in the city and there are many checkpoints on the highway leading to Cojutepeque. A demonstration by the Popular Revolutionary Block, which had been dissolved, was being prepared in the city.by members of the security forces. There were deaths and injuries. Buses were set on fire and the demonstration was dispersed. There is great anticipation for this evening and tomorrow, September 15th, as there has been much talk of serious events that will occur in September. May the Lord grant that spirits calm and that peace reign.

Saturday, September 15, 1979.

It's a sad Independence Day. Besides the rainy atmosphere, there's also a violent and tragic atmosphere.

The morning was very empty because, due to yesterday's riots, truck service lines had been suspended, and there was an atmosphere of fear. However, I managed to go to Colonia Dolores to celebrate the patronal feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. I invited them to celebrate not only a Mass for the Colonia, but a Mass for the entire nation. May we feel solidarity with the great needs and problems of the country and, placing the Virgin as our intercessor at the foot of the cross, may we ask the Divine Redeemer for the graces of salvation for our beloved people.

There were a good number of confirmations, including older girls and some older boys, as young as eight, and I noticed the effort Father Mamerto made, along with a Sister of Charity and other catechists, to adequately prepare for the reception of this sacrament of the Holy Spirit. I also met several members of the Committee of that Church,pulling them up morale, continuing the work, not only on completing the church, but also on building the convent and the parish school.

I spent the rest of the day in the hospital, preparing the homily and reflecting on the situation in the country.

That evening, the Guadalupe nuns of Arcatao informed me that they had received an appointment from the Director of Immigration, who had already arranged it with the Mexican consul, to determine their situation. They fear this could mean expulsion from the country. Monsignor Urioste will accompany them and say "cheer up"and serenity. I told them that after Mass, the next day, we would see each other.

With Father Moreno and Beto Cuéllar, we have prepared a series of terribly tragic reports: violence, kidnappings, and work problems have occurred this week. May the Lord always inspire me to be impartial in my assessments.

Sunday, September 16, 1979.

It's dawning in the pouring rain. Mass cannot yet be celebrated in the Cathedral due to the considerable damage caused by the prolonged occupation by the Popular Revolutionary Block. However, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart was packed with people. Television crews from other countries were present, as well as a journalist from Le

Monde, France. The welcome was very warm, especially when I told them in the homily that the Holy Father had asked for me, as well as the news brought to me by Father Ellacuría, for an interview with Father Arrupe after his trip to Central America.

And that Father Arrupe had expressed to him in highly complimentary terms the work of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, especially regarding the teaching in the Sunday homily. There was further information, and above all the allusion made by the Pope in an Angelus address in which he asked for prayers for El Salvador. With this introduction, applauded by the people, I began a homily on Christ, the true Messiah. And I continued by explaining false messianisms, since the readings lent themselves...

That evening, I went to the parish of San Francisco de Mejicanos to install the new pastor, Father Juan Macho Merino, a Passionist. This congregation will serve this area of the archdiocese and will have a group of theologians and philosophers there who will be preparing for this same congregation. Meanwhile, they will go to the seminary of San José de la Montaña or the Uca to receive their formation. Afterward, a joyful and cordial meeting took place at the Domus Mariae, adjacent to the church.

CHAPTER 20.

Year 1979.

Diary from September 17th to October 19th.

1979.

Monday, September 17, 1979.

In the peaceful atmosphere of the Carmelite Sisters of Saint Joseph's house in Santa Tecla, the Presbyteral Senate met. The main points were an analysis of the serious accusations made by Archbishop Aparicio in his homily last Sunday, according to which the murdered priests were killed by left-wing groups, who did not allow them to retreat. The other point was an analysis of the church occupations.

On the first point, it was agreed that the Archdiocese, which feels implicated, should visit Archbishop Aparicio and inform him of the gravity of his accusation; of the support it provides to priest assassins; to request evidence, as we need to know it, if it truly exists; and to ask him for a joint effort with the Episcopate to defend, not accuse, the rights of our priests and our people. At the same time, information is being prepared for Rome that is as objective as possible.

As regards the occupation of the temples, it was agreed to study it further in a specific meeting organised at the Father FedericoSanggiano, parish priest of El Calvario, one of the churches hardest hit by the occupation. Father Quintero, who called for reconciliation with the Church, was expected to arrive, but he never arrived.

Father Sanggiano was also asked to speak with him and suggest a spiritual examination and, at the same time, psychiatric treatment. Father David Rodríguez arrived at the end of our meeting and had lunch with us. He informed us of another homily given by Archbishop Aparicio last Sunday, in which he made serious accusations against the Archdiocese and banned the reading of the newspaper Orientación in homes in his diocese.

After lunch, Monsignor Urioste visited me to inform me of his meeting with the Director of Immigration, where they discussed the issue of the Mexican nuns working in Arcatao. The Mexican consul, who, contrary to Immigration's claims, knew nothing about the matter, was with them.

The Director of Immigration was very rude to the Curia's envoy, Monsignor Urioste, although he later apologized for his direct attack on the Archdiocese's position, saying that he should have apologized to me, that this was not the intention, just as it was not that of the President or the Government, because Monsignor Urioste had asked him whether his attitude towards him, personally, corresponded to the attitude of the Government.

Archbishop Urioste also gave me three communiqués from progressive military officials who are planning-confidentially, of course-a change of government on more democratic grounds. This fills us with hope, and I hope that El Salvador will soon breathe a better air than the current climate of violence we live in.

While speaking with Archbishop Urioste, I received a phone call from Argentine television, asking me to give a one-minute summary of the country's situation. I assumed my role as Archbishop and offered a brief pastoral overview of the conflictual and explosive nature of our environment and the Church's mission, which preaches peace based on justice. The same old theme, reduced to one minute.

Tuesday, September 18, 1979.

This morning, the General Assembly of Ysax Radio Society, the Voice of the Pan-American, was held. The new director, Teto Samour, reported on the year's activities, almost all of which were led by Father Rogelio Pedraz, who recently had to retire due to his Jesuit status and responsibilities in Guatemala. However, he left a profound mark on this radio broadcasting effort. I have already written to him expressing my deep gratitude and the hope that, when circumstances allow, he will be able to return to work with us.

The relationship also included financial matters, and an auditor was appointed, my brother Arnoldo. Various aspects of the radio station were discussed. The installation of new equipment and a new antenna were also discussed, and I even wrote a letter to a friend who owns land near Tonacatepeque about it.

We hope that from there the antenna can spread the Pan-American message more widely. There was a climate of optimism and understanding for this work which, thank God, is providing such a service to our Archdiocese and to the entire Church in El Salvador. In the afternoon, the Seminary team met with the Archdiocesan Seminary Commission, attended by Monsignor Rivera, the episcopal representative responsible for the Seminary.

In this capacity, and as Bishop of Santiago de María, he made a valuable contribution to the dialogue between the team and the commission, which initially seemed somewhat tense and full of prejudice. However, thank God, it gradually softened and took on a cordial atmosphere, allowing us to work in an area of fundamental importance in the life of the Church: the formation of our future priests.

Father Sigfredo Salazar, rector of the Minor Seminary, was appointed coordinator for the Archdiocese. The formation team also had some tensions with him, but these have

since been resolved, and it seems that God has greatly blessed this meeting. It was agreed to continue holding more frequent sessions, discussing such an important topic.

That evening I went to the archdiocesan Caritas meeting. But they're already finishing up and I'm just taking this opportunity to express my condolences to theMissElsa Herrera, since the meeting was held at her home.

Wednesday, September 19, 1979.

Work at the Archbishop's Palace began today, when I gave space to two photographers from American magazines who asked me to pose for them. They kept me busy for about fifteen minutes, taking a huge number of photographs. I told them it was the first time I'd had to pose so much as an artist.

Then followed the interviews, most of them today, with people who were very poor or afflicted by injustice, mothers of missing persons, to whom I sought to offer a word of encouragement or guidance in their difficulties. The meeting concluded this morning with a discussion on the economics of labor in the Cathedral. The occupations have caused serious disruptions to worship and the construction of our Cathedral.

The Administrative Commission took the problem very cordially and indicated three solutions: that the works, because if they were suspended it would be difficult to resume them and huge sums of money would be lost, since the entire structure of the dome would be ruined.

And so, it was necessary to provide what was necessary to complete the dome, even if that meant borrowing money from other sources. And we were offered to borrow our mortgages from the bank, or to ask Father Sáenz, who had been lent the money for its construction, forward its return; or finally, ask the Priestly Cooperative to expedite the purchase of the inn it intends to acquire. This has been specifically assigned to some of those present who, as I repeat, are all available to resolve this difficulty.

There was also talk of a trip to Europe to visit aid institutions to address this economic problem, which could also include the need to build a house for the bishop, who doesn't have one, and for the Curia offices, which the archdiocese also lacks.

I had lunch with the Claretian seminarians of Santa Tecla. A friendly group of nine young men and a priest who cares for them, we shared moments with them that I will always remember, in the spirit of the Claretians who nurtured my first minor seminary in San Miguel. The conversation at the table and after dinner was very interesting, and I think they were very satisfied, just as they gave me great encouragement.

In the afternoon, my work began with a Mass celebrated for a child who died of cancer. I preached to his grieving parents and companions how God, by taking these little flowers from the world, is telling us that all is not lost and that, amid so much hatred and violence, so much unpleasantness, the world can offer the Lord the best flowers for His throne: our children.

And secondly, this made us understand that the world needs to suffer in order to be saved, that the crucified Christ continues to redeem the world through suffering and pain.

I then attended the meeting to study the criteria and approaches to adopt regarding the occupation of our churches. Archbishop Rivera provided canonical advice, and Father Fabián offered excellent pastoral reflection. It's clear that in normal times, these occupations are acts of profanation sanctioned by law. And that, indeed, they cause great harm, especially in terms of the de-Christianization of our people, but the situation is abnormal.

And just as Christ said, "Man is not for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is for man," and just as eating the showbread was permitted under abnormal circumstances, so the occupation of the temples, when all channels of expression have been closed, is a lesser evil, and therefore reflection should only serve to fuel our criteria, but not to appear as a rejection of a need of those who should express the concerns of the people.

Aside from this, it was expressly agreed to close the Cathedral, the Church of the Rosary, and the Church of Calvary, as they are the three most sought-after, without making it public. They will remain closed until a place of worship other than a church is found, and until this situation is resolved.

Finally, late that night, I received a visit from Sister Judith, who had been expelled but, thank God, has returned from Guatemala and will continue to work in El Paraíso de Chalatenango. A family also visited me, crying and saying, "We come as children to a Father to express our feelings, because they burned a bus that was our business, our way of life, and today it leaves us deeply financially compromised."

I offered them words of encouragement and rejoiced that she was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. And it was a family that, under the charismatic inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had made progress in maturing their faith and hope. I told them that they held

the secret of the solution with great faith, but that, at the same time, they had to commit themselves because God would bless them, just as He was testing them.

Thursday, September 20, 1979.

The first issue we discussed with the Vicars General, the Episcopal Vicar, and the representative of the Guadalupean Sisters Provincial was the issue of the Guadalupean Sisters working in Arcatao. The sisters' concern is the persecution and slander to which they have been subjected, and the Mother General recommends that they not return, even though they would send to others and that as a condition there would be the attention of a priest who would visit at least every two weeks, something that was resolved through Father Fabián Amaya, Episcopal Vicar, and Father Isidro, a Jesuit, who committed themselves to this spiritual assistance.

The other sisters who cannot return to Arcatao today will dedicate themselves to the Secretariat of the Archbishopric and will see what community or work they can find near the capital. Dedicated to their pastoral work, which they do not want to give up.

During the morning, several visits arrived from priests, nuns, and the faithful. In the afternoon, I received a representative of the February 28 Leagues to announce a visit scheduled for the following day. Introduce myself to the platform commonly developed through popular dialogue, which offers peaceful solutions to the country's situation.

Afterwards, I left for Cojutepeque. In the parish of San Juan, Father Edmundo Brizuela prepared a good number of young people and children over the age of eight for Confirmation. A lively, joyful, and enthusiastic community also renewed their baptismal

and confirmation vows.we have shared friendly with the people on the way out and with the Father in his convent.

I was unable to attend the Seminary meeting I had promised this evening, but it was held with the Rector of the Minor Seminary.

Today I also received news that two bishops, friends from Venezuela, Monsignor Roa and Monsignor Ovidio, arrived from Nicaragua on their way to Mexico. I announced the news for the following day. Concelebrate at the Church of the Hospital of Divine Providence and after breakfast go out for a walk in the surroundings of our capital.

Friday, September 21, 1979.

A morning of visits. Of particular note was the interview on Radio Cadena Central, in which he wanted to compare my opinion with that of Archbishop Aparicio, but I told him I didn't want to touch on controversial topics and complained because he had repeatedly insisted on dialogue, on this confrontation. I took the opportunity to reiterate the Archbishop's position on pastoral care. Also very important was the interview with a Brazilian journalist who works for important newspapers in the country and around the world. BBC London.

He asked me a series of questions to reflect on aloud. It wasn't a true dialogue, but rather a proposal of arguments that I then developed in the manner he suggested, like someone thinking while speaking aloud. And it was nothing less than a reaffirmation of the Church's position in the face of the misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and persecutions it faces in this country.

I had lunch with the Guadalupe nuns who work at the Secretariat, since they renovated the kitchenette in my apartment. I also invited Father Nicolás González and Sister Rosa María, who has been experiencing a serious lack of understanding from the Congregation of the Carmelites of Saint Joseph since they eliminated her and sent her to her homeland, a South American nation. However, she wants to stay and work among us, which she can do, since she no longer depends on the congregation once it was eliminated.say "cheer up"and then he stayed to talk with the Vicar of Chalatenango and was offered various solutions to continue his work with enthusiasm.

After lunch, I spent time with the third-year seminarians, individually discussing their ministries, which some are eager to receive, while others are waiting. I informed them of the closeness of the priesthood and the need for good preparation to fulfill the hopes of our Archdiocese.

And that evening, at the Hospital of Divine Providence, representatives of political parties and grassroots political groups presented to me the common platform developed during the popular dialogue, seeking to call for the unification of the people around a common program. I found it very valid and believe it represents another path to rationality for our people. I congratulated them and promised them my full support on behalf of the Church.

Saturday, September 22, 1979.

Today I went to Guazapa to administer Confirmation to a group of fifteen-year-olds.years ago, prepared by the parishes of Guazapa and Aguilares. It was a

very thoughtful and well-attended ceremony. At the end, the young people gave wonderful testimonies of their ecclesial commitment and truly felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. After Mass, I met with the catechists to learn about their work and address some of the concerns they had expressed.

I had lunch with the Carmelite Sisters of San José, who are concerned about their congregation, which seems to lack a full understanding of this pastoral work. We agreed to meet privately tomorrow with the other nuns of Apulo,where I will go tomorrow.

That evening, I received the German ambassador, along with a representative of West Germany. The conversation was very interesting and touched on topics related to the Church and the country. They offered me their full support. The ambassador promised to visit me and be attentive to our every need, to assist us.

I later met with Father Moreno and Beto Cuéllar to discuss the week, which was extremely intense, especially in terms of protests and violence.

Sunday, September 23, 1979.

The Mass was held in the Basilica, as we had agreed to keep the Cathedral closed to avoid the difficulties of the occupation. There was a large turnout and much applause for the homily. I explained to them that I wasn't proud of it, but rather, it made me feel more like a servant of the people, and that I was trying to interpret this communion of sentiments they expressed with their applause. I asked them for a profound commitment to prayer and to following Christ with his cross.

After the mass I had a meeting with the Italian television, who were present at the mass to get the details, and with a journalist from London.

Then I went to Apulia where todayIt's the patronal feast in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows. A charming gathering by the lake; we celebrated Mass with lively participation from the communities, who seemed very attentive to their presence. During lunch, the youth groups joined in with joyful songs.

There was also news from the Carmelite Sisters of St. Joseph.

After lunch we had a very friendly meeting reserved withThe four nuns who work in pastoral ministry, in which they clearly expressed their concern about feeling misunderstood by their institute. I told them that, until substantial changes occur, they must always remain faithful to their Carmelite vocation and that we should pray much to continue to explore God's will for our situation.

On returning to me I witnessed the sad spectacle of young people chasing each other to death with stones. The people standing next to a van where the chaos was unfolding were visibly worried, but I couldn't do anything given the fury of these people. I hope they're safe after that violence.

Italian television arrived in the evening, but was unable to capture some of the things it would have liked due to a lack of material, but it was coming from Nicaragua and wanted to complete its coverage.

After Mass in the Cathedral, I went to celebrate the patronal feast of Our Lady of Sorrows in the parish of Ilopango, in the canton of Dolores, Apulo, near Lake Ilopango. It

was a very picturesque celebration, as the chapel has a splendid view of the lake and the people were extremely warm and attentive to the Church's message. I presented them with my pastoral letter, and the theme of the homily was the exhortation to devotion to Our Lady, which I propose at the end of the letter as our Church's contribution to resolving the country's crisis.

After the Mass, we shared lunch with the Carmelite nuns, the novices who came to sing and the representatives of the various communities, spending a very pleasant moment in the dining room of Apulo. A very intimate conversation followed with four Carmelite nuns who felt that their pastoral work was being misunderstood in a congregation where the form is very careful, but where the ecclesial spirit necessary to understand the pastoral work carried out by our Archdiocese is lacking.

I told them that as long as there was no change they would always be good Carmelite nuns, obedient to their superiors and that I would be worried about talking to make this pastoral work understood, which many do not understand, especially when there is so much slander and misunderstanding.

In the evening, Italian television came to complete its reporting work, taking photographs and releasing statements on the situation in the country and the Church.

Monday, September 24, 1979.

Day of the Virgin of Mercedes.

I celebrated Mass in the women's prison, where the Sisters of the Good Shepherd had prepared a large group of women and several women to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. The theme of the homily was the Holy Spirit, who is given in Confirmation, who created the perfect woman in Mary, and a call for a Christianity inspired by the Holy Spirit in our time. I had lunch with the inmates who had invited me, and, in a very pleasant event, the Mexican Lions offered various recreational activities. I went out to conclude the afternoon with a pleasant rest.

That evening, I returned to celebrate the patronal Mass of Our Lady of Mercy at the Parish of Our Lady of Mercy, presided over by Father Torruella. The service was well attended and gave me the opportunity to speak about devotion to Our Lady as a characteristic of Latin America, but a devotion that, as the Pope and Puebla suggested, must evolve according to the needs of the people.

Tuesday, September 25, 1979.

A morning of very intense visits, especially from the priests, given that on Tuesday I have to dedicate myself in a particular toPriests. However, there were some secular emergencies. A soldier visited me to discuss the difficult situation and his very secret intentions, which we will discuss in a meeting with others, which he will prepare for the coming days. Also, a visit from journalists, always interested.of the our situation.

In the afternoon, the Seminary Commission met with the Interdiocesan Seminary training team. I was unable to attend because I hadn't been notified in advance and had other commitments with the Salvadoran Peasant Confederation. It was very interesting.

They offered their full cooperation and asked the Church for guidance on how to respond appropriately to the current situation.

The urge to always remain the same as farmers, as a group, and I thanked them for this sense of attention to the Church, which, despite all the slander, has no ill will, but rather the desire to serve and guide sincerely according to the Gospel.

I prepared the recording for the radio speech the next day.

And in the evening, a visit from an entrepreneur informed me about the activities young entrepreneurs are carrying out to unite the various right-wing and left-wing movements around social justice. I congratulated him and promised him the cooperation of the Church, which, of course, cannot commit itself to any political group, but has a duty to guide and support whatever good may come from this search for solutions for the country.

Wednesday, September 26, 1979.

The first visit this morning was from a Jesuit missionary from India, who has heard a lot about our Archdiocese and told me he enjoyed listening to last Sunday's homily. He brought several homilies as souvenirs of his visit to San Salvador. These have already been distributed in printed form, to show to his companions in India, as examples of a Church that is a source of inspiration for the entire world and which he considers almost a miracle.

I thanked him for his very flattering words and expressed our gratitude, praying for India, and asked for the solidarity of the prayers of those Churches.

Another interesting visit today was that of a Venezuelan journalist and political scientist, who gathered our impressions and thoughts on the situation in the country and the Church. He showed great interest in the life of our Church and its constant defense of human rights.

Several priests and lay people were also busy this morning, visiting our Archdiocese. Father Missionario was deeply impressed by the activity at the Archdiocesan headquarters. I thank God for this witness our Church is giving, and, as I told Father Missionario, I will use his impressions to encourage our Church to remain faithful to his Gospel.

At noon, I went to lunch with the Fathers of the Mexican Vicariate at the Mexican Church, where Father Samuel Orellana welcomed us with great kindness. There, we celebrated the graduation of Father Nicolás González, who gave me a copy of his thesis and read the affectionate dedication he had written on the first page. I thank him for this new testimony of priestly solidarity.

The thesis concerns an author and the topic "Love as an Expression of Personality." Over lunch, he explained several philosophical aspects of his topic.

Several priests from the diocese of San Vicente and Father Clemente Barrera from the diocese of Santa Ana, accompanied at noon Miss Ana Echeverría, daughter of Doña Guadalupe, a noble matron of Mexico, who had a very hospitable spirit towards all these priests when they were seminarians and came to visit me, surrounded by all these priests,

for which I praised that sense of hospitality and the great reward that God gives to those who care for his priests in this way.

She was deeply moved and I too was deeply grateful to the Lord because his priests, despite persecution, always find a Bethany that welcomes them with affection.

Thursday, September 27, 1979.

On this day the Somaschi Fathers invited me to concelebrate in theBasilica of Guadalupe, in La Ceiba, Eucharist in honor of its patroness, the Virgin Mater Orfani HoI had the pleasant surprise of meeting not only the Somascans, but also the priests of the Vicariate of La Asunción, in Flor Blanca, who are holding retreats this week at the Somascan Fathers' novitiate. Also present were the nuns, their novices, and their students, as well as seminarians and students from the Somascan Fathers' College.

It was an intimate yet solemn celebration. In my homily, I spoke about the shortcomings of orphanhood. That is, a lack of fullness of life, a lack of unity-since the Mother is the bond of unity in the family, and when she is missing, the family seems to disintegrate-and a lack of direction.

When the Mother is missing, the child's loving guidance is also missing; applying these three shortcomings to the great needs of our people, for which we must invoke the Virgin, our Mother. Without her, we are orphaned and bereft, as El Salvador is suffering, bereft of life and guidance.

After Mass, all the priests went to lunch at the Novitiate, in a moment of great cordiality and familiarity.

At two in the afternoon, I met with the representative of the Canadian Embassy, who brought a donation of thirty thousand colones for projects to be organized through Caritas, and who promised to allocate more for next year. I thanked her and must inform her so that we can present a project commensurate with this donation, which we greatly appreciate.

I went to celebrate the feast of St. Vincent de Paul in the chapel of Santa Luisa, where we also inaugurated the very pleasant Stations of the Cross, with the participation of nuns, students, and Daughters of Mary. We also had a very cordial dinner there with the parish priests of El Calvario, who are the Somascan Fathers, and the Sisters of Charity. It was a very family-like, very cordial dinner.

We listened to Monsignor Aparicio's radio interview, in which, unfortunately, he continues to condemn priests with false accusations, thus leaving them in grave danger.

Tomorrow, God willing, I will go to Ciudad Barrios for two days, fulfilling an invitation from the nuns and, at the same time, a great desire to see my beloved city again, even if only briefly.

Friday 28th and Saturday 29th September 1979.

On Friday, September 28th and Saturday, September 29th, I went to Ciudad Barrios to visit my hometown and to encourage the Maryknoll Fathers, who recently took over

the parish, and the congregation of Carmelite Sisters who have collaborated in this ministry for several years. Memories of my childhood and contact with old friends renew my enthusiasm to pursue the vocation God gave me in that humble town of Ciudad Barrios.

When I came back, I felt a little sick; I think it was the flu.

Sunday, September 30, 1979.

I celebrated Mass in the Basilica with a fairly large attendance, and in the afternoon, despite my physical discomfort, I went to celebrate the anniversary of the Legion of Mary at the Parish of Divine Providence in Colonia Atlacatl. It was a warm welcome; a small celebration that I only managed to attend before returning to take care of my health.

First week of October 1979.

Since Monday, October 1st, I've been resting in bed. It's the flu.It prevented me from keeping all my commitments this week. Thanks to Monsignor Urioste and Father Brito, and others who collaborated, we were able to attend Mass at the Carmelite Institute by proxy. He could preach Holy Hour at the Hospital of Divine Providence.

I was unable to attend the Christology course held at the University of the Externado San José. It was led by Father Arias, a Jesuit, and was attended by about sixty

priests, nuns, and lay people from that vicariate. I was also unable to attend the meeting in Ayutuxtepeque to discuss Parish Committee matters.

Bishop López Portillo was kind enough to confirm me at the Hogar del Niño and the Colegio Santa Inés de Santa Tecla. I also attended Mass on the feast of Saint Francis at the Church of the Concepción and at the Parish of San Francisco Morazán, Chalatenango, by proxy.

Monsignor Urioste also went to inaugurate the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Jayaque, where he had promised to go on Saturday, October 6th. Thank God, I feel better at the end of the week and, to the best of my ability, I will try to carry out my duties next Sunday.

I was treated by a very dear doctor, Dr. Suárez, a cardiologist, who also assured me that my condition was now normal, although he was careful to make me rest a little.

Sunday, October 7, 1979.

I was unable to attend the youth meeting organized by the seminarians of San José de la Montaña, nor the confirmation that the nuns had organized in Zaragoza, but Monsignor Modesto was present and Monsignor Urioste was present at the meeting. I celebrated Mass in the Basilica, which was well attended.

After the Mass, there will be an interview with three foreign journalists. And in the afternoon, at 6:00 p.m., at the Church of the Rosary, today the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary,per celebrates OneConfirmation for young people prepared by the Dominican

Fathers. I preached on Our Lady of the Rosary and thanked the Fathers for their pastoral work in that parish.

That evening, two military officers visited me confidentially, discussing their plans for the government's renewal. We will wait until this week; in the meantime, I promised them my prayers and all the moral support the Church can offer in such delicate circumstances.

Tuesday, October 9, 1979.

There was a Pastoral Commission meeting. I was only able to attend at the end because there were so many priests visiting.

At twelve o'clock, as promised, Of an interviewer Voice of America, which will be broadcast from Washington on the radio, on the visit of the Holy Father to the United States and his speeches at the Husband in the Oas.

In the afternoon, there was a meeting of the Seminary, the Seminary Committee, and the team of trainers; I couldn't attend because I wasn't feeling well, so I stayed home to rest.

Wednesday, October 10, 1979.

At the Belén School in Santa Tecla, I met with Fathers Monsignor Urioste, Jesús Delgado, Fabián Amaya, Ellacuría, and Estrada, along with lay priests Román Mayorga

and Héctor Dada, to seek advice on the Church's stance in the event of a planned coup. They were very cautious in advising me, above all, to remain vigilant and await, even in the best-case scenario, the risks the situation might pose, and to refrain from offering any demonstration of solidarity that might jeopardize our lives.

Many conditions were set that enriched my understanding of such a difficult situation. The main conditions that had to be demanded were, first, a purge of the army,one purpose of profound structural changes and the participation of the people and all their opinions in a true democratic opening. The Church expresses the people's feelings and the hopes they may have for a government that can improve the current situation.

In the afternoon I celebrated Mass in suffrage for Doña Abigail de Giralt, benefactor of the Hospital and great personal friend.

Thursday, October 11, 1979.

Visit of the U.S. Ambassador with his political advisor. For my part, I was advised by Monsignor Urioste and Father Estrada. The purpose was to answer questions from the State Department regarding the Church's assessment of the country's current situation and what the most effective solution might be. In theory, we were talking about a democratic opening, but in practice, this path was hindered by repression and the government's limited credibility. What was foreseeable was a violent solution or a coup d'état.

We have asked the US government to use its influence to accelerate what theoretically seems most useful, but which, in practice, is being destroyed, since the above-mentioned signals are not being transmitted.

I had lunch at the Guadalupano school to greet the Mother General of the congregation, who came from Mexico.

This afternoon I was at the San José de la Montaña Seminary with a group of priests from the Cuscatlán Vicariate, on a spiritual retreat. It was a very fraternal and cordial meeting, where we shared the truth and made resolutions to improve our relationships and our desire for authentic pastoral care.

In the evening, an interview with Dutch television at Divine Providence Hospital and with a journalist from La Prensa del Costa Rica.

Friday, October 12, 1979.

Visits by representatives of the International Red Cross, who came from Switzerland at the government's request to testify about human rights violations. They claim they are not there for this, but to provide humanitarian aid, and are unable to provide testimony such as that announced by the President. They sought the Church's opinion, and we have informed them in detail through Father Moreno and Beto Cuéllar, who are responsible for Legal Aid procedures and the complaints received by the Archbishopric.

There was a meeting of the Vicariate of the Mexicans at Domus Mariae, but I was unable to attend.

I had lunch at the home of Don Pepe Simán, who told me his impressions of his trip to the United States, where he had been able to witness the Holy Father's visit to New York up close.

In the afternoon, a pleasant Mass and Te Deum were held in the chapel of the Colegio del Espíritu Santo, where about thirty Franciscan nuns, Eucharistic Mercedarian nuns, Passionist nuns, Carmelite nuns of Saint Joseph and Saint Teresa, Good Shepherd nuns, and Josephite nuns graduated. I spoke to them about the role the Church must play in Latin America today in evangelizing the culture of our peoples.

Saturday, October 13, 1979.

I went to Nejapa, where the Quezaltepeque vicariate organized a group of young people for confirmation.

It is truly impressive that these young people, so carefully trained by catechists and parish priests, after Confirmation bear witness to their desire to work with all their youthful determination for the Kingdom of God.

That afternoon, there was an ecumenical event at the Rosary Church, but I couldn't attend because I was waiting for Dr. Badía, who would bring me some very important reports on the classified information I mentioned earlier. It seems there has been a

betrayal within the military group, and they are very tense, but they remain firm in their determination to carry out the planned event.

Sunday, October 14, 1979.

Sunday Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart was well attended, despite the bad weather.

It rained a lot last night and even dawn broke without a trace.time.

At six o'clock in the evening, in the Church of Mary Help of Christians, a moving Confirmation ceremony was held for groups from the various parishes of this vicariate. Nearly one hundred young men and women, after an afternoon of spiritual retreat with their parish priests, approached, filled with awareness, to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Monday, October 15, 1979.

I celebrated Mass in honor of Saint Teresa of Jesus in the hospital and asked for special prayers for the national situation, as this is a crucial day.

In fact, shortly before eight o'clock, Father Jesús Delgado informed me that at eight o'clock in the morning the military organization will take control of all the barracks and from there will summon thePresident's performance. I had an engagement at the Parish of

San Juan Cojutepeque to participate in a Bible competition at the parish school and I asked that whatever they warned that parish.

It was an extremely interesting morning. Father Raimundo Brizuela and Professor Luis Molina worked wonders with the children's Bible reflection and study. The day concluded with a public speaking competition and Bible catechism lessons.

These children and young people are growing up in a deeply biblical environment, deeply imbued with the Christian spirit. Many qualities manifest themselves in eloquence, poetry, memory, and intellectual abilities. This was my impression, which I expressed to them when I congratulated them and thanked them for this wealth that they had given me.

At noon, while we were eating with the teachers, the news came that rumors of a coup, and they warned me it was dangerous to return to San Salvador. However, I returned, and everything seemed normal.

I was tense because I knew what they'd told me that morning and I couldn't see any concrete results. I thought it was doomed, but rather late, around five o'clock, the news began to spread over the radio that President Romero had abdicated and left for Guatemala. And, indeed, the barracks had been taken, effectively leaving the president without support. He sought refuge in any of the barracks, but they were all occupied.

And the coup, as they say, was scientifically prepared and carried out in such a way that no change was noticed in the city; life was normal, not a drop of blood was shed, except in San Miguel, where the commander opposed it and a bodyguard was killed or wounded, but everything else seemed normal.

In the evening I had a discussion with Monsignor Urioste at his home, because he is ill, and with other priests and lay people to advise me on what the Church's attitude should be.

They argued that it was best to wait and see how things would unfold, but that a pastoral appeal could be made to the population, urging them to be cautious and avoid any extremism from either the right or the left, and, at the same time, an appeal to the new government to hope that keeping its promises would restore the government's lost credibility among the people.

This evening I prepared the message that would be broadcast on the radio the following day. A glimmer of hope was palpable in the air, although at the same time the fear of a military coup raised concerns about the reaction of left-wing forces, who were already calling for a popular uprising.

There are also concerns about the far right, which will feel provoked by the new government's manifesto, which promises numerous economic and social reforms. Let us hope to God that they understand our good will and that we will all work together to overcome this crisis in the country.

Tuesday, October 16, 1979.

Even the day ofOf great importance. I woke up preparing the archbishop's statement; I was assisted by Father Moreno and Father Gregorio Rosa, and a visit at nine o'clock on behalf of the new Presidential Council. He asked me to hurry and appeal to

reason, since outbreaks of reaction were beginning to emerge among the left. In Mejicanos, in Soyapango, there had been outbreaks of violence, threats, and provocations, and they, the new government, did not want to be provoked.

I had a radio conversation with Father Jesús Delgado.in what I have already expressed theThe concepts of the statement I announced at noon. By noon, we had the following statement ready: "Pastoral appeal in light of the country's new situation."

Since yesterday, El Salvador has entered a new and delicate phase in its history. A military uprising has deposed the government of General Carlos Humberto Romero. Our Church, which, by its very identity and evangelical imperative, has committed itself to accompanying the people through all their vicissitudes, feels a responsibility to speak out first in this new situation. This is not a political statement, but a reflection, in the light of our Christian faith.

For this reason, first of all, it rises to God as a prayer, and from there it draws light and energy to guide the people and interpret the Salvadorans' just desires for liberation to the new government. God first. This expression, so Salvadoran, springs from the profound religious sense that the Church cultivates in the souls of our people. This is its first word and its first attitude. We raise our prayer to the Lord of history because "unless the Lord builds the house, the workers labor in vain; unless he guards the city, his guards keep watch in vain" (Psalm 127).

Our prayer is also a sign of thanksgiving to God because, according to the information available to us, bloodshed has so far been avoided in this event.

Our prayer is also an offering to the Lord of all the suffering and pain of our people, who have bathed our soil with their blood. May this high price be enough for God to forgive us.a future of authentic justice and peace. Finally, our prayer to the Lord becomes a prayer of reparation and a call to conversion, because hatred and revenge can never be paths to true liberation. The path that leads to authentic well-being forever through justice and love.

"To the people: after addressing God, our word, which is the word of a shepherd, is addressed to the people as a call to reason and a promise of service. We know that the patience of our long-suffering people is running out, and we fear that the expectation created by the military insurrection could turn into dangerous impatience or degenerate into renewed violence.

All the more so since countless martyrs and heroes have emerged from this people, a dramatic testimony to these nightmarish recent years. However, in this crucial hour we are living, we wish to urge our people to be prudent, for it is wise to observe and wait before judging and acting. An impatient and violent attitude would be as culpable and unjust as the oppression and repression that has engulfed our poor homeland. Our appeal also goes to those who, unjustly defending their own economic, social, and political interests and privileges, have been guilty of so much unrest and violence.

Allow me to remind you that justice and the voice of the poor must be heard by them as the very cause of the Lord, who calls to conversion and who must be the judge of all men. We invite those active in popular political parties or organizations to demonstrate true political maturity, flexibility, and the capacity for dialogue. Only in this way can the people be certain of being truly inspired by the true good of their country. Fanaticism or

idolatry of one's own party or organization would be today, more than ever, a grave sin against the common good.

The crisis the country is trying to overcome cannot be solved by a single group; it must be the work of all; everyone must, therefore, build a common platform of their own justice as the foundation of their brotherhood. Our message is not only a call for sanity, but also a promise.

The Church renews its commitment to continue offering its selfless service to the people. The country's new circumstances in no way alter this desire to serve. It was this sincere desire to serve and defend the people that brought the Church into conflict with the previous government; therefore, this conflict can only be resolved when we have a government that serves the people.

"To the new Government: Finally, our words go to the new Government that emerged from the military uprising that overthrew the previous regime. We have carefully studied the messages expressing the new Government's official thinking. We recognize in them good will, clarity of ideas, and a clear awareness of its responsibilities. However, we wish to clarify that this Government will only earn the people's trust and cooperation when it demonstrates that the beautiful promises contained in the Proclamation issued this morning are not a dead letter, but a genuine hope that a new era has begun for our country.

For our part, as pastors of the Church, we are open to dialogue and collaboration with the new Government. We set only one condition: that both the Government and the Church recognize that "our raison d'être is service to the people, each according to his own competence" (Gaudium et Spes). "This is our first word on the difficult journey that

begins today and which we hope, with God's help, to continue to illuminate starting from the Gospel of Christ. May the Divine Savior guide the steps of all men of good will who work to build justice and peace in our homeland."

San Salvador, October 16, 1979.

Last night I learned that there had been very positive feedback, both on the conversation with Father Chus and on this pastoral appeal. The movement's leaders themselves, Colonels Gutiérrez and Majano, designated by all the Armed Forces as leaders of this event and of the Civic-Military Committee, came at 1:00 PM to thank me for my support and to offer their services.

I took the opportunity to give you the opinion of the Church, above all, which will demonstrate with the facts; the most sensible ones for the people would be: a general amnesty and honest information about the disappeared, the return of exiles, etc.

They promised me they would do everything and that they were grateful TheseTheir suggestions, their inexperience in an extremely difficult position, assumed almost impulsively, are evident. However, the coup, they say, had been planned for about a year, and they believe the success that crowned their efforts obliges them to be faithful servants. This also applies to the trust the entire Army has placed in them, and the fact that everyone is aware of the need to quickly incorporate the laity.

This afternoon, I received news of the violent incidents in Mejicanos, Soyapango, where Father Villarán also disappeared, taken away with the entire group of prisoners. But the Board of Directors itself informed me that they were asking for forgiveness

because he had been unknowingly taken to the Treasury Police and that they had already...they're back.

I have contacted the government to arrange a visit by priests and lay people to report on these incidents, which could undermine the hopes people have in them.

And insist that they demonstrate that they are motivated by the best will and that they demonstrate it with actions.

There were many calls from journalists, but I responded with the statement I just read. There have been many reports of reactions from various quarters, and we are waiting. For our part, the Church's position has been clear: always at the service of the people from the perspective of the Gospel.

Wednesday, October 17, 1979.

Last night I had dinner with Román Mayorga, rector of the University Central America (Uca), but for current reasons the meeting was postponed, as he will be part of the new Civic-Military Government. This morning I had a phone call with him, which I'll tell you about later.

This morning I prepared the radio interview with Monsignor Urioste at midday to reiterate the Church's position during this period of government change.We will strengthen ourselveswell, the thought that the Church is not involved in any specific political situation, but always maintains its independence in order to be able to approve what is good and criticize what is bad.

There were numerous visits from priests and lay people, with whom I took the opportunity to enrich my perspective and offer my guidance as a Church, to shed light on this historic moment for the country. Several journalists also came to seek the Church's opinion, which was expressed in the same direction.

In the evening, with the third-year theology seminarians, we discussed, as we have in previous meetings, the Church's hope in these six new members who will join the presbyterate next year. We discussed their youth and vocation ministry at the parish of San José de la Montaña, but from an archdiocesan perspective. And I am pleased to see how they have come together to advance this work, which will undoubtedly benefit the Seminary and young people in general. They have already appointed a youth ministry committee, made up of other young people who met with them two Sundays ago.

They also criticized certain attitudes at the time of the change of government, including those regarding my message, especially because it was broadcast nationwide. They believed it was a manipulation of the Church to support the new government. And they believed the Church should have given greater testimony to its independence. I welcomed this critical attitude and told them it was positive that, whenever there were doubts, they were spoken out openly. They will consult andTo emerge from this with greater solidarity towards the Church. And regarding this specific case, I told them I was responsible for what I had written and said, and not for how it had been manipulated by one sector or another.

The fact that he appeared on national television does not seem to me to compromise the Church, since the message transcribed there was, precisely, my conviction of autonomy, independence from the new government and prudent support,

naturally, because it is not right to criticize and attack him without giving him time to understand his actions.

They were satisfied, and I also told them that this was the risk of every prophetic mission in the Church, even being criticized by one's own people and even being left alone, but with the satisfaction of having tried to be faithful to the Gospel.

The phone call with Mayorga was specifically to arrange a visit, during which he asked my opinion on joining the Civic-Military Directory. I told him he was a trustworthy person who would inspire confidence in a broad segment of the population. Given his Christian spirituality and his academic background as rector of the University Centro American (Uca), he was the right person to provide rational support to the movement, which until then had been exclusively military. In a gesture of humility, Mayorga told me he heard God's voice within me and that he would commit himself.

I also told him that it wasn't an unconditional commitment, that if anything unpleasant happened, he would have to withdraw himself, and if I had noticed, I would have told him myself. He knelt down and asked for my blessing. And I believe he is a man we can fully trust, who brings a sincere representation of the Church's thinking to the challenging realm of politics.

Thursday, October 18, 1979.

Among this morning's visitors was the Swedish Ambassador, interested in learning about the Church's current thinking. Architect Adalberto Morales was also present, and delivered a valuable denunciation of the media, which, with this change of government,

must shed light on their servile and complicit attitudes toward the previous government, defaming the Church and insulting venerable institutions and individuals.

I also received another similar letter from Napoleón Navarro, who also asks the new Government to reduce spending on armaments and to return the fifty million that the previous government had taken from various ministries to allocate to defense and the purchase of weapons.

Navarro also criticizes the attitude of the United States government, which, after lifting sanctions against El Salvador, is now offering military aid. This letter states that this isn't about military aid; we're already fed up with bullets and weapons; what we need is a hunger for justice, justice, and aid for the progress of our people. The visit I received from engineer Tato Osegueda was also very valuable. He served under the previous government but resigned to follow his conscience. Today, he fully supports everything the Church has done and wants to collaborate along this same line of thought.

He told me that this hope for redemption sparked by the coup is, in large part, the fruit of the awareness my preaching has sown. I thank him for this appreciation, and, for my part, I naturally rejoice, not out of vanity, but in thanking God that his justice and his kingdom are being opened through his servants in the Church.

Several journalists also came that day. And at seven in the evening, in the Church of Sant'Ignazio, I presided over the graduating class of the Holy Family girls' school. At the end of Mass, a bomb exploded very close to the school, destroying the local power plant and a gas station. The power went out, and we finished class in the dark.

In my homily, as a message to the new graduates, I emphasized the dual synthesis that the Church expects from all those who are educated in Catholic schools and institutions: a synthesis between faith and culture and a synthesis between faith and life.

Friday, October 19, 1979.

Around ten in the morning we had made an appointment with the journalists who will try to hold a single press conference. Television reporters from the Netherlands and Mexico, radio reporters, and journalists from other countries, including our own, were present, and I reiterated my thoughts on the Church and its relationship with the new Board of Directors.

This afternoon I went to San Rafael Cedros with Father Deras, the parish priest of that city, who had arranged a meeting for me with his collaborators, especially catechists, with whom we shared the Church's concerns and hopes for the laity. We had a very interesting conversation...

This afternoon I went to the parish of San Rafael Cedros, where I met with pastoral workers, primarily catechists. Afterward, I attended the inauguration of the sewing exhibition at the San Rafael Tailoring Academy, founded and still directed by Father Leopoldo Deras, the parish priest of that city. He greeted me with a very warm and thoughtful greeting, and I responded by praising the Church's work, not only in spiritual evangelization but also in these social advancements, encouraging young people to continue this synthesis between faith and life. We concluded the afternoon by going to church to celebrate Mass.

It was packed, and above all, a wonderful group of young people preparing for Confirmation stood out. I took the opportunity to inspire that community to serve others, the charisms the Holy Spirit gives us, and vocations, especially by experiencing Confirmation.

CHAPTER 21.

Year 1979.

Diary from October 20th to November 17th.

1979.

Saturday, October 20, 1979.

I attended the funeral of Father Marcelo Weil, a dear, longtime friend. Although not a Christian but a Jew, he was a man who respected everyone's faith, and his human integrity is a true guarantee that God has welcomed him into heaven. A close-knit family with whom I am truly friends, and I feel at home when I visit their home.

That afternoon I also went to the Lourdes school, run by the Sisters of the Assumption, to celebrate the First Communion of boys and girls.To praise theI work in that poor, working-class neighborhood, and I encouraged everyone present to cooperate. At the end of the Mass, I received a call from the Presidential Palace. They wanted me to

come because they needed a consultation, but I begged them to come to my house, as my presence at the Presidential Palace might be misinterpreted.

They understood the reason and went to the Divine Providence Hospital: Colonel Majano, Minister of Defense, and another military officer, with a large contingent of bodyguards and investigators, which was still disturbing given the hospital's simple nature. However, the topic of conversation was very interesting: they were concerned about the criticism leveled by our radio station, Radio Ysax, of the appointment of the director of the Military School, Colonel Rafael Flores Lima, whom the Catholic station had criticized for his actions during the previous regime, as head of the Presidential Household Information Office.

He is responsible for the distortions of news, the smear campaigns against the Church, the falsehoods and lies, which is what is known as spreading byPresidential House.

They tried to defend him. We stood our ground: if there hadn't been more drastic changes in the country's military structure, this coup would have failed and the population would have suffered another setback. We also insisted on the method of appointing the Defense Minister, who was present, because he had been appointed solely by the military when civilians were not yet present.

Colonel Garcia, who is the Minister of Defense, had the idea of saying there in front of us, Father Estrada was with me, that he resigned at that time from the Ministry while the civilians were not there to ratify the appointment, which had been made by the two colonels who had nominated him.

I also took the opportunity to denounce the abuses the Church continues to suffer under this new regime and the apparent repression people feel with the military operations that took place this week. They tried to explain that they were purifying, mentally refining, and developing new ideas, but that the work was difficult, and they asked for our understanding to wait. They were certain that there was widespread corruption and that they were even deposing leaders, which posed new risks because they knew they were meeting and could launch a right-wing counterattack.

In short, it was such a cordial conversation that it ended with a cup of coffee, offered by the nuns, in a very cordial atmosphere, even though it had been very sincere and frank. There was a promise of mutual help, but in the service of the people.

Then I continued my meeting with Father Estrada and Father Moreno to prepare the details of my homily. Late that night, Father Moreno left and, unfortunately, took the documents with him. But thanks to a very helpful friend, Salvador Barraza, I managed to convince him to come and pick up those documents at Santa Tecla, the Jesuit house, at midnight. I told him he had to hurry because it was 11 p.m. and martial law would begin at midnight. But, thank God, everything went well, and I continued studying my homily until 4 a.m.

Sunday, October 21, 1979.

Mass was celebrated in the Basilica. There was great anticipation because people wanted to hear the Church's judgment and its position on the new government. The Voice of America described this judgment as conditional support, and so it was. I asked for

support and cooperation in the just things proclaimed by the new government. Be cautious and don't attack it before judging well.

But I also complained to them about the series of violent acts and military abuses that occurred this week.andslowness It isIt is clear that they are making offers to defend human rights, especially by insisting that they must be held accountable for missing persons and all those responsible must be brought to justice.

I have received many congratulations for the impartial and just position the Church seeks to adopt; at the same time, I have supported the hopes that this new coup can offer and that, if properly exploited, could represent the rational solution mentioned by the Pope for the problems of Latin America. According to the Pope:all of youThere is no need to resort to violence, as all our problems can be solved by rational means.

There was much applause at various points in the homily, demonstrating that he was expressing the people's feelings. And I told the Board of Directors that this wasn't a negative criticism, but rather support and encouragement to promote their ideals, rather than instilling a sense of frustration in our people.

After the Mass, an interesting press conference was held in the Basilica itself. Television, radio, and the press conducted a very intense interview, and a large part of the audience gathered around the conversation, including Father Inocencio Alas, who surprised me and whom I greeted warmly, promising to see him again later.

That evening, Father Inocencio Alas told me about his current work in the United States and his current positions in Nicaraguan companies. He insisted on the opportunity to go to the United States, since there are many Latino communities there that support

me, and I should go to thank them and, at the same time, encourage their solidarity efforts. I promised him I would go, and let's also add the communities of San Francisco, California, and Los Angeles.

Monday, October 22, 1979.

I received very positive feedback from yesterday's homily. The verdict reflects the justice I have sought to deliver at this time, calling out the new Board of Directors for several actions that undermine its proposals and promises, but, at the same time, criticizing the violent, uncompromising, and impatient attitude of far-left groups.

This morning there were many visits from priests and faithful to the Archbishopric. I went to lunch at Don Pepe Simán's house, quite late, because we had to be late for lunch.These visits and consultations. I felt deeply overwhelmed by the lack of understanding in the community regarding the current political situation and the Church's attitude. At four o'clock in the afternoon, I had an audience with members of the February 28 People's League, who maintain an uncompromising stance.

I offered to initiate a dialogue with the new government authorities, but they replied that they would have to consult their leaders and that they didn't think it was appropriate, as they totally disagreed, because this government is nothing but an obstacle to the popular uprising. I tried to make them understand this, but they were very stubborn.

At five in the afternoon, at the Externado San José, the Legal Aid Service organized a press conference with foreign and national journalists, attended by the

families of the disappeared and political prisoners. The authentic presentation of families mourning and truly grieving the disappearance of a family member was deeply moving.

This gave Legal Aid the opportunity to present its position, which is very much in line with the Archbishop's position: defense of human rights, denunciation of all those who violate these rights, and the firm position to continue demanding the appearance of these prisoners, as confirmed by documents that Legal Aid has thoroughly verified.

Tuesday, October 23, 1979.

We held a meeting of the Archdiocesan Executive Council, where we discussed the country's difficult situation. Fernando Valero Iglesias was present, bringing an invitation from the Netherlands for the Archdiocese of San Salvador to preside over the December event organized by a Dutch ecumenical organization. Previous participants included Archbishop Helder Cámara and Archbishop Méndez Arceo, who wished to present the Latin American bishops and their ecumenical movement, which provides this service to Latin American projects.

It was also a morning full of visits, including Fathers Majano, Rivera and Rodas of Santiago de María, who came to invite me to the twenty-fifth anniversary of that diocese, which will be on December 2nd. It was proposed that the celebration last three days, dedicating one to each bishop of that diocese, therefore,they have dedicated to the second day in honor of the Blessed Virgin and they offered me an event after the Mass, and I will stay on Sunday when there will be a concelebration in which all the bishops are expected to participate.

Naturally, I accepted, because it is a diocese in which I have served and where today Monsignor Rivera serves with great affection, and he is a true pastoral support for me.

Pepe Simán and Father Goyo Rosa, Father Fabián, and Monsignor Urioste, the radio director, analyzed the radio and media's approach, which must be very sensitive during this difficult time for our country. Father Pepe Simán and Monsignor Urioste also organized and coordinated my upcoming trip to the United States.

I went to lunch with a group of priests who were on a retreat with the Opus Dei Fathers in Clara Luna. The topic we meditated on was Pope John Paul II's letter to priests during Holy Week this year. Father Fernando informed me of a letter that had been stolen from the Congregation for Bishops and apparently distributed maliciously, to defame the work of Opus Dei. I told him I wanted to study the matter and discuss it with him later. In the afternoon, I gave an interview on Swedish television in the hospital.

An Italian journalist also followed suit, always trying to capture my thoughts on the Church's current position in the country. The concepts I expressed are the same as those in last Sunday's homily. I had to cancel my visit to Dr. Semsch because I had to record my program for tomorrow, as I won't have time tomorrow due to my trip to La Libertad. That evening, I also had dinner at Dr. Chávez's house withMonsignorUrioste, Father Estrada, Dr. Morales Erlich of the Christian Democrats, a new minister, the Minister of Planning, and two other young industrialists.

It was a very enriching conversation, rich in experiences and open-minded. I had the impression that there are also highly educated minds in the business world, deeply

sensitive to social issues. For my part, I believe I expressed to them the genuine thinking of the Church and an appeal to the wealthy classes to foster the change our people need.

Wednesday, October 24, 1979.

Today is Hospital Day, and in my radio interview I referred, in part, to this event, recalling that the patient is the center of the hospital and that around him, doctors, nurses, etc., who work, hopefully, with the spirit of Christ, are congratulated and admired, so that everything done for a patient is done to Christ himself.

But my pastoral ministry continued all day at the parish of La Libertad. At nine in the morning, a wonderful group of three hundred confirmands met, all over the age of twelve, well-prepared in their respective communities in the cantons and neighborhoods of La Libertad. And then, in the canton of Cangrejera, at two in the afternoon, another group of confirmands met, one hundred and fifty young people, also very well-prepared.

Thank God, we concelebrated with the two North American priests and with Father Manuel, who collaborates with Ateos, and thus, all four of us were able to confirm and fuel the crowd's liturgical enthusiasm. I congratulated the priests, nuns, catechists, and all the collaborators, and I invited the faithful to take advantage of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit to further promote our Christianity as a community and, in this hour of national crisis, to be truly worthy Christians.

In the evening I received a visit from Mr. Herson Meyer, of the World Ecumenical Council of Switzerland, who came to visit me together with Valero Iglesias for a chat, simply to say hello, since he was passing through on his way back to Switzerland.

There were calls from the Presidential Palace that I could not answer because I was far from the archbishop's seat, as I said, in La Libertad.

Thursday, October 25, 1979.

This morning I had an interesting consultation on the country's political situation. It was very informative, given that one of the participants is an expert in these analyses. We concluded that a longer discussion was needed and agreed to spend the entire morning in Bethlehem next Monday and to invite other key figures in the Archdiocese's government.

That evening, a meeting of the Major and Minor Seminaries was held with the Archdiocesan Seminary Commission. The idea of bringing these two entities together was presented so that the seminarians would feel that a group of priests, representing the entire presbyterate, offered them the full cooperation of the priests, and so that they, the seminarians, would be introduced to their future ministry, which would be carried out jointly with all the priests. At eight o'clock that evening, I went to the home of engineer Román Mayorga Quirós, a member of the Revolutionary Government Council.

I noticed that he was extremely tired and very worried about the situation, especially the rebellion of the far left. But I tried to encourage him and to tell him that the responsibility of the moment was great and that God had to help them. The meeting was held at his home, and Mayorga's wife welcomed us with great kindness.

Friday, October 26, 1979.

I celebrated Mass at the Carmelite Institute, where I had promised to come many days ago to celebrate Mass, and today we celebrated Mass as a closing ceremony for the school.

The luncheon took place at the home of the U.S. Ambassador, who, along with two aides, welcomed Monsignor Urioste, Father Estrada, and me. It was a very interesting conversation, especially about the change of government, and we tried to offer whatever assistance we could.The United States they lend in this change to be peaceful. They offered to do everything in their power.

At four in the afternoon I celebrated a mass in memory of one of the young people killed during the repression in San Marcos last week.

I received a visit from Colonel Jaime Gutiérrez, head of the Revolutionary Government Junta, who explained the difficulties surrounding our requests, particularly regarding missing persons. I note that there are real difficulties within the Army, and we clearly express our concern if this sensitive issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the population.

There was also the opportunity to offer our services, within the Church's autonomy, and also to be able to ask for things that might offend the Church or delay the process they want to initiate and undertake, to achieve the peaceful changes the country needs. It was a very interesting experience and I am also looking forward to it.Monsignor Urioste and Father Estrada.

I had dinner at the home of Fernando Valero Iglesias, who had prepared a reminder for me to plan my next trip to the Netherlands, at the invitation of an ecumenical institution.

This afternoon, we had a brief meeting with the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas. The problem today is the director, Rafael Medrano, who wrote a very insulting letter to the director, Father Rutilio Sánchez. A supervisor had to be fired due to some abuse within the office, resulting in the dismissal of a pregnant secretary, who was granted legal leave.

Yet, we are witnessing improper behavior. It's a difficult situation, but I told the women on the Archdiocesan Council that they could mediate and resolve the issue. For my part, I offered to speak with Father Tilo and the Director to see if a more practical solution could be expedited. For example, Medrano could resign, as he doesn't seem to be comfortable in this institution.

Saturday, October 27, 1979.

I went to see a beautiful group of young people and children, prepared in Tamanique by the Maryknoll Sisters. I said goodbye to Mother Juanita, who was absent due to her mother's illness, which led to her death. She is worried about leaving her father alone, but she is deeply devoted to this community. The Tamanique community struck me with its great vitality. After lunch, we had a very lively meeting. The Mass, of course, was very fervent, and the confirmation celebration was a truly inspiring sacramental liturgy.

In the afternoon, I celebrated the closing Mass of the Minor Seminary. During the Gospel, we shared our reflections, and it was a wonderful way to thank the Lord at the end of the year.

At that moment, several visitors were present at the Archbishop's residence, in addition to a brief interview with the press and television, since journalists from Venezuela and other countries had to return very early the next day.

We were expecting a member of the Board of Directors, Engineer Mario Andino, but he didn't arrive. I had to call the Presidential Palace for another matter, and they were in an emergency meeting.

Sunday, October 28, 1979.

The Mass in the Basilica was well attended; the homily was widely praised, although some dissenting voices were also raised regarding the political line they would like one of them to adopt.

In the afternoon I went to the parish of Colón, in the canton of Delicias; there was a beautiful confirmation and wedding ceremony. Fourteen couples who were being catechized for the catechesis of that region.

After the solemn Mass, we met with the pastoral workers, who expressed their enthusiasm for the ministry and their solidarity with the parish priest. I was deeply

impressed by the work that Father Nicolás Menjívar is doing there with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and the laity, who are truly a source of hope.

I forgot to mention that after the Mass in the Basilica, a press and television conference was held, attended by journalists from Germany, Venezuela, Honduras, Guatemala, and I don't remember which others.

I also gave a radio interview to Ysu, who asked me my opinion on the current political situation.

I've stated this from a pastoral perspective, as I always make clear.

Monday, October 29, 1979.

We spent the entire morning at the Belén School in Santa Tecla, along with Monsignor Urioste, Father Estrada, Father Ellacuría, Father Fabián Amaya, Father Moreno, and a political scientist from the University Centro American (Uca), reflecting on the country's current political situation and adopting appropriate pastoral measures. The political scientist explained the revolutions in Peru and Bolivia, providing us with an overview of our situation. We then delved into an analysis of the country's current situation.

In the diversity of opinions, I found a richness of thought because I understood that both the Government Junta and the grassroots political organizations deeply opposed to the government have their positive and negative aspects. Hence, the Church's position is to encourage what is good, to support it, both within the Junta and within the

organizations, as well as, for the love of country and justice, to protest against anything that hinders this revolutionary process that seems to have begun.

In any case, we feel that something new is happening and that we must pay close attention to the signs of the times.

The day passed with much Violence.As we drove through Santa Tecla, some tires parked in front of the Basilica of La Ceiba were burning to the ground. And around noon, gunfire rang out in the city center, resulting in several deaths. Also in the afternoon, the Minister of Defense called to tell me that shots were being fired from the Cathedral toward the National Palace, but that the security forces had orders to run out of patience and not to push back unless absolutely necessary. He asked me to intervene with the Cathedral residents.

I sent Father Sigfredo, who met there with Monsignor Modesto López, rector of the Cathedral. They had looked around the Cathedral and noticed nothing unusual, except that the church was occupied, locked, and slogans were being blared from inside through the microphones-in the sense already known-of the Popular Revolutionary Block.

There is uncertainty in the air, but we hope in the Lord that everything goes for the best.

The Ministries of Labor and Economy, which have been occupied by the Block for several days, announced that the hostages will be released today, with the exception of the ministry officials, who will remain prisoners.

Radio Ysax asked me for a brief comment on the situation, and I condemned the acts of violence and welcomed the release of the hostages. But with the same right to freedom, I called for everyone's release as soon as possible. I was also asked about the situation at the Cathedral, and I said what I've said before: that we didn't notice anything unusual and that the occupation of churches, ministries, and other scandals are not constructive, especially when a call for dialogue is being made.

I called for political creativity, for learning the language of politics rather than the language of violence, since today is a very dangerous time for the use of violence in this highly explosive environment. And, on the other hand, it is very constructive to express, in a legitimate pluralism, the opinions of different sectors of the population.

I once again called for peace and a more rational path toward justice and peace. The schoolCatarinaof May, whose director is Sister Socorro, came with a representation of students to give me a check for 500 colones, which the school had raised through activities supporting our radio station, Radio Ysax. We had a very pleasant conversation, in full solidarity with the Church's thinking. That evening, Dr. Chávez invited me to dinner with engineer Napoleón Duarte. He had just returned from exile in Venezuela.

It was a candidate for the Christian Democrats, along with Colonel Molina, who, according to widespread rumors, had become president through fraud. Therefore, Duarte considered himself president throughout his exile. The new Government Council lifted his exile, and Duarte returned.

There, at Dr. Chávez's house, we attended the televised conference given by Engineer Duarte himself, who spoke highly of me as a champion of the people's hope and offered to collaborate, from the political arena, in this same popular struggle.

It was a very solid and hopeful conference. In our lively conversation with him, we also shared our different perspectives on the country's current situation, and Dr. Chávez affirmed that Duarte and I were two people the Lord had raised up in our fields to lead these people.

For my part, I wish to express my gratitude for these honorable comments, which represent the fulfillment of my evangelical mission. I also agree that Engineer Duarte has leadership qualities and is undoubtedly a charismatic man for the times we live in. He must be very careful, because there are many enemies who would not want him to have such influence among the people.

Tuesday, October 30, 1979.

We held an Executive Council meeting to primarily discuss the Secretariat for Social Communications, for which Fernando Iglesias intends to request a grant from the Netherlands and establish a robust Information Secretariat. We also attempted to coordinate support for Radio Ysax, since all advertisers have withdrawn, and this is a good opportunity to support an independent and purely cultural radio station. Director Teto Samour and Father Gregorio Rosa have been tasked with finalizing the details of this campaign to support the station.

I went to the doctor, Dr. Basagoitia, after having blood tests, and, thank God, he told me that my health is good, even better than during my last visit. I thank God and promise to continue dedicating my life to serving His Church.

In the afternoon I celebrated mass at the Hospital of Divine Providence,per the eternal place memorial for the four dead peasants, including the late Polin. They were four peasants who died, riddled with bullets from soldiers, on the road to Santa Ana.

In the evening, we met with the third-year high school students of the Minor Seminary: fourteen young men, all ready to continue their studies for the priesthood. Some in the diocesan priesthood, others in religious life. We spoke at length about vocation, the country's current problems, and the hope I have for them. The nuns from the hospital served us pupusas and chocolate, and it was a very pleasant meeting.

Last night I prepared the speech that, God willing, I will give to the New York Council of Churches. I haven't finished it yet.

Wednesday, October 31, 1979.

Today I woke up very early to continue working on the pastoral message requested by members of the National Council of Christian Churches in New York. I continued to work as hard as I could, but the morning of visits was very busy, because at 7:30 I went to record the midday program on the situation in the country and other issues people are asking about. I also had a meeting with the Vicariate of Aguilares to discuss the issue of Father Joaquín Brizuela and the pastoral work in Ciudad Arce.

It seems that Father Brizuela prefers to move to another vicariate, perhaps that of Cuscatlán, in the parish of San Rafael Cedros, whose parish priest, Father Leopoldo Deras, has proposed a transfer to Ciudad Arce.

I gave an interview to English and Guatemalan television, along with other journalists always interested in knowing the Archbishop's thoughts on the current situation in the country.

In the afternoon, I was unable to attend the Mass in El Paraíso, which I had promised the young men who would be ordained as Alpinist today, but I asked Father Sigfredo to represent us. I dedicated that day to completing the aforementioned work for my trip to the United States.

Thursday, November 1, 1979.

I had breakfast with the Seminary team to discuss some issues related to the relationship between the Interdiocesan Seminary and our Archdiocese of San Salvador. They discussed, first, the San José de la Montaña Seminary, which, although owned by the Archdiocese, should be left entirely to the Interdiocesan Seminary. Therefore, the team suggests removing it from the Archdiocese to avoid any potential inconvenience arising from conflict with other bishops.

The issue of occupying office space was also addressed, which is covered in the same previous topic. The main thing is the seminarians' report so as not to provoke controversy. between theSeminary and the Archdiocese, as happened last year.

I suggested to them that what has already begun, thank God, is a better way to achieve this goal: greater dialogue between the team and the archdiocesan community, through the Archdiocesan Priestly Commission. This is a group of priests of diverse

convictions, who can also provide the team with the criteria for a joint report on our seminarians.

This morning was very busy at the Archbishop's residence. Among the other visitors was Father Lencho Llach, who expressed concern that the occupation of the ministries included coffee workers who worked with small and medium-sized coffee growers and were implicated in the occupation.

Representatives of the Popular Revolutionary Block were also present, with whom I shared my opinions-naturally diverging from theirs-on the current situation. I took the opportunity to ask them for a swift resolution to the occupations of the ministries.

They're very dogmatic in their ways, and it's difficult to communicate when they already have clear ideas. However, I tried to be as friendly as possible, to leave the possibility of dialogue open.

I went to lunch at Don Pepe Simán's house where he was also MonsignorRivera and Monsignor Urioste discussed the advisability of our trip to the United States, although it always depends on the circumstances, which are so variable at the moment.

In the afternoon, I held a well-attended Holy Hour in the hospital chapel, during which I greeted several people who are currently part of the government or who have very interesting opinions on this situation.

I finished writing the speech, or rather, the pastoral message, which I will deliver to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States on November 8th. As I was finishing this work, around nine o'clock this evening, I received very alarming

phone calls from the Presidential Palace, imploring me to intervene at the Rosary Church, occupied by the February 28 League, because they had captured a member of the National Guard, and the Guard headquarters was asking the Government Junta and its authorities to release this Guardsman, dead or alive.

I tried to contact Monsignor Urioste and Father Rogelio, and we went to the Church of the Rosary, where the League leaders informed us that they had indeed captured this guard for clandestinely entering the church with weapons. They believed he had malicious intentions because two other armed officers had arrived with him. They were unable to capture them. They had notified the Attorney General to officially arrest him, but had heard nothing from him. I asked them if they could hand him over, and they agreed, with a document and a witness.

I reported it to the Presidential Palace; they were delighted that the solution was so simple, but I didn't think it would be so complicated, as the Leagues later insisted that it be handed over to the Prosecutor for greater security. Monsignor Urioste contacted the Prosecutor and requested his presence, which was greatly needed at that time.The delay of the Public Prosecutor complicated the situation, since around half past twelve we began to see the National Guard arriving near the Church of the Rosary.

I tried to get information from the head of the operation, who told me there was intense pressure at the National Guard barracks. Around 1:00 AM, everyone wanted to come; I tried to calm them down. The colonel leading the operation regained his composure, but I noticed the guards were extremely aggressive. They even used some harsh language, and it was clear they had no patience and were ready to act at 1:00 AM, which was just a few minutes away.

I told the Leagues that yes will hasten TheThe guard was handed over; the report had already been drawn up; the prosecutor also agreed, so we handed it over to him, but when they received the guard, despite a clear easing of tension, they began to say that there were two other police officers there and that they would come for them.

We denied that there were others captured, but they didn't believe us and apparently complicated matters with the National Police. The released guard restored calm at the Guard barracks, where the attack ended, but the police barracks were still closed.to rise up demanding theThe return of the captured police officers, according to them. We reflected. The prosecutor was very nervous.

Even the colonels who arrived from the Presidential Palace and the police believed something was out of control. We proposed searching for the police officers known to the missing, according to the police. They will examine the inside of the Church. But the Leagues demanded that they enter unarmed.

And so two unarmed plainclothes policemen, whom I accompanied along with Father Alejandro Peinador, a Dominican from that church and a member of the Human Rights Commission, accompanied the two policemen who were examining one by one all the occupants of the church and also the coffins, twenty-one unburied corpses that were to be buried in a pit dug inside the church, because, according to the occupants, they were in grave danger of being taken to the cemetery for burial.

Fortunately, there was no sign of the police, and at the same time, it was reported that they had already found one in his house. This also relieved the National Police's other pressure, and thus he was able to... calm the situation. However, the occupants asked me to stay, just in case, and the Dominican Fathers prepared a room for me; they

did the same with Monsignor Urioste, and so other human rights representatives stayed for the night.

Friday, November 2, 1979.

All Souls' Day. At six in the morning, I returned from the Church of the Rosary. I then received calls from the Presidential Palace expressing their gratitude for my intervention. I took the opportunity to describe how I perceived the situation within the security forces: some commanders are polite and want peace of mind, but some officers can become insubordinate, and a moment of disobedience can be fatal. I was happy to intervene and told them I was at their service; that was what the Church was for. I spent the day resting because insomnia is taking its toll on me.

At noon, however, I celebrated the three Masses for the deceased. And in the evening, I awaited the visit of several young soldiers who, through Father Gutti, had requested an audience with me. They informed me at the last minute that they had been summoned by the Emergency Presidential Palace and that they were very sorry, so I postponed the interview until later.

Saturday, November 3, 1979.

I spent the whole morning in the Parish of La Palma, Chalatenango, where the Franciscan Father,Food Guaranteed, awarded the title of tailoring academy to a new group of young people who have been training in this art for two years. We also blessed the house under construction, which the Father will use to promote spiritual life and also

for training courses for all social classes in that splendid parish. The atmosphere was refreshing, and the people were very kind.

A great deal of promotional work is being done, both by the parish priest and the "La Semilla de Dios" cooperative, a sector that is already being exploited as a source of tourism. In short, it's a wonderful combination of work and prayer. The Carmelite Sisters of Saint Joseph also have their home there, and their novices were present at the Mass and, afterward, took us on a tour of this splendid residence.

In the afternoon, or rather in the evening, I greeted Colonel Claramount, who had returned from his exile in Costa Rica, and we discussed the delicate situation in the country if the Young Military Junta had not sought advice from the older and more experienced soldiers, among whom Colonel Claramount had selflessly offered to help.

We then interviewed two representatives of the Popular Revolutionary Leagues, with whom I spoke about the occupation of the Rosary Church, the burial of twenty-one dead in that church, and I clarified several situations for which official reports blame them and which, according to them, are not true.

I've encouraged them to embrace dialogue and collaboration, but they're deeply attached to their principles, and it's difficult for them to embrace collaborative dialogue for the common good of the country; they simply want their organizational criteria to prevail.

Afterward, I met with Father Moreno, Monsignor Urioste, and Beto Cuéllar to review the week and define a framework that will guide my approach in tomorrow's homily. It's about finding a balance between a very delicate situation involving abuses by

the security forces, the goodwill of the Board of Directors, and the rejection of grassroots political organizations.

But with God's help, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and my sincere desire to be righteous and truly help people, I believe I have formulated sufficient criteria to be able to encourage and denounce my homily tomorrow in the light of God's Word.

Sunday, November 4, 1979.

To concelebrated in theThe Basilica was attended by four priests who had completed twenty-five years of priestly life: Father Antonio Vides, Father Andrés Alvarenga, Father Joaquín Brizuela, and Father Óscar Martel. There was one from San Vicente, but he was out of control. At the same time, Father Ramiro Jiménez, a Passionist, concelebrated with us, since that same morning he was appointed parish priest of the Basilica.

I took advantage of the homily that speaks of the priesthood of the Eternal Christ, how priests who pass away are replaced over time; from the Letter to the Hebrews, and also from the other readings, what the ministry of priests consists of, the defense of monotheism in the face of so many idolatries, the denunciation of the idolatries of our society, as I say in the Pastoral Letter; furthermore, builder of the civilization of love and minister of the true worship of the living God.

After Mass, we shared a light snack with the priests and some members of their communities in the Basilica's convent, where a press and television conference was also held with foreign and some national journalists. This post-Mass interview is becoming a

regular occurrence, as are other private interviews, which lend a very pastoral and family-like atmosphere to those moments after Mass.

In Metapán, the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were celebrating their centenary. They had invited me to lunch, but I only mentioned it during Mass and asked them to let me know. DispensaryI wasn't even able to attend the meeting of the catechumenal communities, who were conducting their exorcism process at a retreat house in Planes de Renderos. I went to dinner with the nuns of the Colegio de la Sagrada Familia at their small farm in Planes, and the atmosphere was relaxing and cordial.

This evening I waited again for the young soldiers who, according to Father Gutty, would arrive, but they too failed to arrive.

Monday, November 5, 1979.

At eight in the morning, I received a visit from two journalists: one Dutch, one Irish, and another Salvadoran working in Guatemala. It's always the same questionnaire, but it gives me the opportunity to adapt it and be increasingly precise about the situation in the country and the work of the Church as a Church.

I received a letter from the Nuncio to Costa Rica, delivered by a Salesian nun, in which he confidentially informs me that the Vatican Secretariat of State has asked him to notify me that I have received news from a reliable source of a threat to my life from the far left.

This potential threat, which could materialize, is intended to create problems for the new Board of Directors and increase confusion in our city. It hasn't stopped worrying me, given the serious nature of the channel, as I've only received many of these reports as popular comments. Nonetheless, I believe I'll give it the importance I've always given it: a prudent citizen, but without exaggerating.

I spoke about it with Monsignor Urioste, who agreed with me that it could be the same popular rumors that are reaching the highest levels of the Vatican. I also discussed it with two government officials who came to see me, and they told me it was appropriate to publicly denounce it and that, if I wanted, they would provide me with a guarantee, even an armored vehicle. But I told them I wanted to continue running the same risks as my people, and that such security would not be edifying.

I took the opportunity to preserve them or accelerate the events that are coming together with thePeople who are becoming disillusioned if they don't see more proactive action from the government. They explained to me that there are people in some military commands they don't trust and who could be the cause of some betrayal, but that they will verify those points. We discussed other aspects of the new government, and I thanked them for their trust and offered my services within the scope of my pastoral capacity.

I went to see the Nuncio, who had requested an audience with me, and that evening we discussed this news from the Costa Rican nunciature. He offered to let me know he had received the letter, as the Nuncio had requested. We also discussed the situation of the bishops. I asked him to do everything possible to promote our unity, but based on a serious reflection on the situation in the country.

He agreed with me and promised to do everything in his power. We also discussed the situation in the country, and he is concerned that the Vatican has not yet given its approval to the new regime, which is in his best interest so as not to be left behind. He is surprised that the new government, especially the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, has not yet had any communication with him. Our Nuncio is clearly showing diplomatic concern.

Starting at 3:00 PM, members of the Board of Directors met with members of the Popular Revolutionary Block leadership at the Nicaraguan Embassy to negotiate the release of the hostages held at the Ministries of Labor and Economy and, most importantly, the list of demands the Block is demanding at all costs. Negotiations continued until 9:00 PM and were adjourned to resume tomorrow at 8:00 AM.

With my collaborator in the dialogues, seminarian Octavio, I have prepared a short dialogue to convey this threat I mentioned earlier and to offer my impressions of serenity and tranquility. It is common for those who dedicate themselves to preaching truth and justice to be a sign of contradiction in the world, and their voice, even if silenced by death, will always continue to resonate in the consciences of those who share their views.

I also mentioned the suspension of my trip to the United States, given the delicate situation in the country. I also commented on the remarks of the Honduran Foreign Minister, who mentioned me as a potential contributor to working for peace with that country. I also touched on other points that I've forgotten for now, but which are part of a short interview that Radio Ysax intends to begin promoting to gather diverse opinions on current situations and events.

Tuesday, November 6, 1979.

This morning, the first Tuesday, a clergy meeting was held, attended by numerous priests from the Archdiocese and numerous religious and lay people involved in pastoral work in our Archdiocese. The meeting focused on learning about popular political organizations. The three main ones were invited: Fapu, the Popular Revolutionary Block, and the Popular Leagues of February 28. However, the Block and the Leagues had other activities that day and were unable to attend. We did, however, hear a very interesting explanation of Fapu's ideology and strategies. "It's a fight for a government of the people, for the people," explained the group's secretary general...

The Fapu general secretary outlined his organization's ideology and strategies during the clergy meeting this first Tuesday. We are then divided into groups by vicariate to ask ourselves these two questions: first, what are the pastoral implications of this reality of popular political organizations? And second, what is the attitude of the Church?

The group reflection was very enriching because, once the plenary session was over, a series of very positive ideas emerged that further strengthened our pastoral ministry of incarnation in the national context, strengthening above all the identity of the Church.

So, in conclusion, I taught them that I was struck by the clarity with which those in the organization explain their ideas, the nature of their organization, and their strategies. I hope that we, pastoral workers, having a comprehensive theology, a comprehensive tradition of the nature, mission, and life of the Church, will become more aware every day and know how to express it, not only to explain what the Church is, but to live it with

a true Church identity, without straying from our ecclesial line, from which we can do so much good for the political realities themselves, but to the extent that we are authentically the Church of Jesus Christ.

I also told them how these men from the organizations are so dedicated to the work of liberating the people, and that we fully understand this, but it distresses us to think that this struggle is only immanent, only one of earthly slavery and realities, political, economic, etc. We can understand all this and be in solidarity with these liberation efforts, but from our perspective, which is much more comprehensive, because it begins with liberation from sin and promotes man to the dignity of a child of God, heir to God's eternity. For this reason, we are better able to understand the liberations of the earth and direct them toward the great liberation of Christ.

And I also told the pastoral agents that the unity that these forces demonstrate is the secret of their effectiveness and that we too, since we have a theology of communion,we had didn't waste too much less criticizing each other, much less separating ourselves from the ideals and objectives that the bishop, as the person primarily responsible for pastoral care, assigns to the pastoral care of the archdiocese.

When there are differences, we dialogue and understand each other, and we try never to break our communion as a Church. I also announced the invitation of the Diocese of Santiago de María, which will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary on December 2nd. It was a very cordial meeting, rich in insights and pastoral objectives.

This afternoon, a Franciscan priest from Gotera, who arrived with another priest from an Irish diocese, interviewed me on television to discuss the situation of our Church

and our country in his country. This afternoon, we held a meeting of the Seminary Commission with the seminary's formation team.

It was also very enriching, as a great deal of trust is being built between these two sectors, which previously seemed somewhat antagonistic. We focused our meeting and our joint work on the well-being of our future priests. The more united they are with the clergy and the formation team, the more they will feel the drive for authentic priestly formation.

In the evening, the new Minister of Health, Dr. Badía, visited the community of the Divine Providence Hospital and shared with them a pleasant conversation, in which he showed VeryOptimism and a strong desire to serve the country in this crucial area of healthcare. Dr. Badía, the new minister, is perhaps the most qualified doctor in social medicine and is intimately familiar with the health problems of our people. He is a man of great goodwill, very honest, and very competent, which is why I believe he will do very well.

He's already offered his services to this hospital and has even received some grants, not official ones, but from charities. This demonstrates his desire to engage in this type of work.

Wednesday, November 7, 1979.

As I promised Dr. Lara Braun, I called New York to confirm my intention to miss the ecumenical meeting of the National Council of Christian Churches, which begins tomorrow, Thursday. However, this afternoon I was scheduled to attend a Mass at St.

Patrick's Cathedral with the Salvadorans and Central Americans of that great metropolis. I expressed over the phone my regret at not being able to attend, but at the same time explained my pastoral commitment to being with my people.

He understood perfectly and expressed his admiration for the meeting, saying that they would keep this situation in the country in mind in their prayers. I dictated to him over the phone part of the message I had prepared, which was sent to him by email, as well as a message for the Salvadorans who will gather this afternoon at the New York Cathedral.

The telephone interview was recorded and broadcast in the interview I broadcast every Wednesday at 1:00 PM. In this 1:00 PM interview, I also shed light on issues such as the Holy See's recognition of the new government.

At four in the afternoon, we had an interview between Radio Cattolica and Fapu, who complained about comments that didn't clearly distinguish their work and confused it with that of other left-wing groups. Many issues and misunderstandings were clarified, and they were told that if they had any questions, they would be happy to contact us. We want to reproduce your clarifications, since it corresponds to the truth and to always be positive criteria for building the common good of the country. Furthermore, in a radio meeting following this interview, we agreed to appoint the new accountant, Radio Ysax's auditor.

Afterwards, there were two television interviews in Germany and England, and finally, a visit from Dr. Lorens, who is on his way to the ecumenical meeting in New York. He wanted to say hello. I also conveyed my greetings and a hug to that congregation, and I also gave him my messages in Spanish and English, in case they

hadn't arrived. It was a very cordial meeting, and he understood perfectly that I couldn't attend.

We discussed the situation at length and eagerly awaited Dr. Lara's telephone offer to come and convey his greetings and solidarity from that meeting. I also had a private meeting with Dr. Saca and Dr. Badía, during which we discussed various aspects of the new government with great trust and promised to help support their goodwill and all the good they will achieve.

As for me, I reiterated my intention to be faithful, above all, to my Church which must be aware of the history and, therefore, must also criticize uncomfortable things and support what is always a progress of humanity towards the Kingdom of God.

Thursday, November 8, 1979.

I accepted the invitation of the Vicariate of the Resurrection to go to the sea, or rather,At Lake Coatepeque to celebrate Father Vides' twenty-fifth anniversary as a priest. At the Hotel El Lago, we spent a very fraternal day with Father Ramiro, two Augustinian Fathers from the Miramonte Colony, and a Josephine Father from the Central American Colony. The conversation always revolved around current circumstances, and I asked them specifically-and the conversation was very interesting-about how we could contribute.to carry out a real purification of the Army, especially the security forces.

Father Vides, who was chaplain of the Guard, witnessed many of the abuses committed there and the sincere desire of some officers to renew, in accordance with the

Constitution, this Armed Forces, which, if they don't guarantee the country's security, become armed terrorism. There is good will.

I announced to them that the director of the National Guard would come to speak with me that very evening, because he asked for my guidance and moral support, and I believed, in conscience, that the Church should accept these challenges, but know how to serve them with truth and sincerity. They gave me many practical suggestions, and I had also invited Father Fabián Amaya and Father Jesús Delgado to advise me that evening.

Upon returning from an evening stroll along Lake Coatepeque, the director of the Guardia, Colonel Eugenio Vides Casanova, arrived. He respectfully told me he had listened to my homilies for a long time and, when he's not here in San Salvador, lets his son record them so he can listen to them later. He congratulated me on the ideology I'd tried to capture, which he believes is the one the country urgently needs.

I was pleased by this coincidence and this desire from a man who is not just a soldier, but a professional who studied abroad and who truly desires to remove all the obstacles that existed under the previous government and to see a true renewal of the National Guard, which he accepts only as a sacrifice and service to the country.

We tried to discuss, together with Father Fabián and Father Jesús Delgado, the various abuses and anomalies observed within the Guardia Civil during the previous administration, especially in areas like Chalatenango and other more repressed ones. We also lamented the lack of understanding regarding our pastoral work and offered everything in our power to contribute to the noble effort of one day having security forces that are truly respected, not feared.

He expressed to us the fears of the new Government in the face of extremist situations on the right and left, but, with God's help, they believe they can overcome them and leave a beginning of renewal, which must continue the Government that the peopleit's Elijah, when the democratic conditions in the country have been created.

Friday, November 9, 1979.

Amid the intense activity at the archdiocesan office this morning, I received an interview from a foreign television station and another from a local one, specifically from the University. I also received an interview from the Indigenous Association, who came to present important points about their indigenous group. They had participated in the episcopal meeting in San Cristóbal de las Casas, where several bishops, along with Archbishop Ruiz, conducted a study on these aspects of Latin America.

Between us and a small group of indigenous people from Izalco who seek the Church's support to preserve their identity and their true indigenous identity, and not simply be exploited for Salvadoran tourism. They left me the work they studied in Mexico, which we are republishing here for your information on such an important point.

A group from the Central Workers' Union also approached the Church to express socio-political concerns, seek advice, and express their full solidarity with the Church's thinking in this difficult situation. These consultations and contacts with the Church give me great comfort in seeing how the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, through His Church, can continue to be a word and voice of hope and guidance for so many people.

I went to lunch with the priests of the Mexican Vicariate, who are doing spiritual exercises in the Somascan house, on the seashore, in the port of La Libertad.

Another very interesting invitation for the evening. A gathering of former priests who found this fraternal gathering a way to share their concerns and their situation as priests retired from the ministry. They were very happy to have me with them and proposed their idea of creating a grassroots community. I encouraged them in their commitment, since, despite being retired from the ministry, they were still select members of the Church.

May the priestly character they possess equip them for the work of the Church, as a true basic ecclesial community, from which they must live out the missionary and sanctifying character of the Church. I note great sincerity, cordiality, and a profound sense of attachment to the hierarchy.

Saturday, November 10, 1979.

This morning I spoke with Rafael Medrano, director of Caritas, who is having problems with Father Tilo Sánchez, director of Caritas. Together, we agreed that it would be best for both of us to resign and hand over the management of Caritas to a Christian or religious community, for which I have asked for his cooperation.

The community of Aguilares was specifically chosen to lead Caritas for the entire Archdiocese.

Also over breakfast, I spoke with Father Jesús Delgado about the current situation within the Government Council and, above all, the role the Church can play at this time. The Army is open to welcoming Christian leadership, but it was felt that, with Monsignor Álvarez in office as Military Vicar, this would become very difficult. He had already suggested that the new government address the issue, since the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Héctor Dada, is a man of the Church and fully understands this hierarchical problem.

He will be interested in finding a solution, not only regarding the military vicariate, but also regarding other aspects of the Episcopate and its relations with the Government and the Holy See. In particular, I suggested to Father Jesús Delgado that, even without these changes, it would be appropriate to adopt the Christian orientation of our Army in a strictly pastoral sense. He has been a very valuable resource, as he has many friends within the Army, as does Father Estrada, a Jesuit.

Then came Dr. Chávez, a careful analyst of the current situation and a member of the Christian Democratic Party. He presented his views and a draft strategy to strengthen this movement initiated by the new Government Council and to have the courage and openness to collaborate with it for the good of the country. I told him that, from my pastoral perspective, without abandoning my identity as a Church member, I was willing to do anything for the good of the country.

He had proposed a meeting of the military of the Government Council with me and some other members of his Christian Democratic Party; simply a meeting of friendship and assessment of the situation. It seems that next Wednesday, God willing, we will have this meeting.

At noon, Father Gregorio Rosa and Miss Doris Osegueda offered me a blessing for the homily on the week's events. It's a very focused approach and analysis, along with what Father Rafael and Bachelor Cuéllar usually bring me in the evenings, provides me with a guideline to be more fair and impartial.

Sunday, November 11, 1979.

In the Basilica, I celebrated Mass with a large crowd, during which I tried to maintain a very fair balance between the situation of the governing junta-which offers us real hope that some refuse to see, but which it is my duty to cultivate-and the prospects of the left-wing opposition, which is becoming more intransigent every day and whose armed groups are reaching intolerable levels of violence.

It took me over an hour to explain the Gospel of the widow of Zarephath and the widow of the Gospel, presenting my homily as the three forces that offer true liberation to the country: the spirit of poverty, the sense of God, and our firm hope in the mystery of Christ.

Only from this threefold Christian perspective can a Christian see liberation, and therefore it was not a political perspective, but a pastoral one. This places me in a position of autonomy and independence, able to support what is good in every area, as well as to denounce what is bad in every area.

At noon, I went to celebrate Mass for the patron saint of San Martín in the town of San Martín, where there was great joy in the popular celebration and much fervor in the Church. The communities greeted me, provided information on their work, and even had

a very interesting conversation during a lunch meeting, where they shared their political perspectives. This worried me a little because it seemed to me that their political analysis prevailed over the pastoral criteria offered by their bishop.

I felt this concern again that evening in Colonia Santa Lucía, where I also went to celebrate Mass. After Mass, I spent time with the young people, especially those deeply involved in organizational politics. But there is also a good group very focused on the pastoral vision of the Church. These two meetings left me deeply concerned, and I must seek, together with the diocesan collaborators, ways to offer better religious education so that Christian standards prevail over political analysis.

Monday, November 12, 1979.

That day I went to rest at the house of the Sisters of the Holy Family, where I spend the whole day. But at night, I met with a group of young soldiers, about ten captains and majors, led by Father Gutiérrez and, for me, by Father Estrada and Father Jesús Delgado. It was a very interesting conversation.

I saw the good will of this military youth, the sincere desire to offer the country a contribution of true liberation and a search into the thought of the Church, to be better this moment of a process of democratization.

We were allowed to freely express the views of the Church, just as they spoke with absolute frankness about their political and military perspectives. We agreed that these meetings must be repeated and must always be understood from a mutually autonomous perspective: ours, pastoral, and theirs, political and military.

Tuesday, November 13, 1979.

As every Tuesday, I devoted my attention to the priests, although there were some visits from lay people, for example, Dr. Jiménez Barrios, from Jucuapa, who brought me a volume of his poems to give. Like this, if we publish it, the product will be destined for the Seminary. We spoke at length about other matters, and I thanked him for his generous gesture toward the Church, especially considering that he is a convert who found happiness in his conversion to Christ.

In the afternoon, I met with Don Pepe Simán, the newly appointed president of Insafi. He's determined to do so, but he wanted my opinion and blessing. I told him the only issues that worried me were his salary and the insecurity he was facing, given that this is a transitional government with many conflicts. He said he'd already considered these two issues and wasn't overly concerned.

He wanted to serve his country, and if that's what he was burning for, it was an honor for him to have served his country selflessly. I congratulated him, I encouraged him, and he knelt for...ask me the blessing that I joyfully and fervently imparted to him, his family and his new assignment.

There was a meeting with the Major Seminary and several priests. It's a rapprochement that gives me great satisfaction on the part of the clergy and the Major Seminary, which is already the clergy of the future. We spoke at length about evaluating the work in the Seminary, in light of the parable of the talents, and I led the discussion on the Seminary as a community, and on each individual, each talent, as a group of young

men who should have their own unique identity as the Archdiocesan Seminary. Many opinions were offered to define these characteristics of the Archdiocesan Major Seminary.

One of the ones I liked the most was the one who said it was a balanced social sense, under the direction of their bishop. I told them that I approved everything.this and, above all, which is characterised by their piety, for their closeness to God, for being men of prayer, just as one day our people will need them as priests.

When he announced his visit, there was also talk of organizing a meeting with young people for next Christmas. The Abbot of Taizé, with whom I became friends at the Puebla meeting, promised me this visit to the country to celebrate next Christmas together. There is enthusiasm among the seminarians, who will bring together the young people during these holidays, and I believe something very splendid will emerge, in keeping with this charisma of the killed of Taizé, which has a special grace in dealing with young people. On this occasion, four of the six third-year theology seminarians will receive the ministry.

Father Goyo Rosa, accompanied by a major, came to visit me confidentially. During his visit, the soldier made sensational revelations about the disorder reigning in the Army, of which he was also a victim; but also about the good spirit among the youth working to purify the Salvadoran Army. I thanked him for his confidences, which specifically referred to the abuses that had occurred in Soyapango and in the factories the day after the coup.

All of this was a misinterpretation of an order, which cast him in a bad light and forced him to transfer to another barracks. With due confidentiality, he confided in me, and I thanked him for it, considering it a clarification that would be very useful to me.

Wednesday, November 14, 1979.

I spent the morning with the Administrative Commission, which was meeting specifically to discuss the bishop's residence and the archdiocesan office. The commission's opinion was that such an expense was unnecessary, given that the seminary is well-equipped and offers a greater witness to poverty and austerity. However, I explained to them the reasons we had discussed with the seminary team, given the discontent of the other bishops, who believed it would be better to build a building independent of the archdiocese, even if it were located on land owned by the seminary. For me personally, a residence was unnecessary since, thank God, I share the community of Carmelite nuns at the Hospital of Divine Providence. However, I would not want my successor to be without a home.

I also informed them that European institutions had offered assistance for this project, which would therefore cost us nothing. However, I suggested developing a simple and functional project. Everyone agreed that it would take into account not only the present, but also the future, since the life of the Archdiocese, thank God, is growing significantly and requires new offices for its functions. The Seminary, too, is growing and will need to be dedicated exclusively to this project. I was very pleased with the consensus, after such a divergence of views.

This afternoon, an interview announced several days ago with Licensee Jorge Acosta, who, together with Licensee Valero Iglesias, publishes popular editions of papal documents, as he has done with my pastoral letters. The title of the interview is:El Guanaquito. And he explained to me how they make him assimilate the language.of the farmers and ensure that the ideas in these documents reach them too, even if they are illiterate.

It's a truly brilliant project, and, from what I've been told, it has attracted the attention of other countries, who believe it's very useful to emulate this effort to reach farmers. For my part, I congratulated them and offered them some ideas, urging them to continue producing a work so useful for the Church's teaching and, above all, for the Christian education of our people.

Afterward, I visited the group of priests who are dedicating themselves to spiritual retreats at the Seminary. This is the Vicariate of Quezaltepeque, but there are priests from other vicariates. We discussed the current situation in the country and the role of the Church, the different perspectives and opinions that prevail among the clergy and Christians, and I insisted that our perspective be entirely pastoral, without ignoring the political issues that need to be explored further.

But I appreciated the second part even more, when we discussed the human aspects of our relationship as a priest of the Archdiocese. There was great benevolence. We shared the shortcomings that can hinder this communion, not only in faith but also psychologically, and I appreciated the attention paid to my own shortcomings, which can hinder what I would like to be very cordial relationships. There were very useful insights for all the participants in that meeting.

In the evening, as usual, I spent the evening reviewing my correspondence. Thankfully, I have a good secretary, Sister Nicolasa, a Guadalupe nun, who provides me with a summary of the letters, in which I jot down ideas for responses. Correspondence arrives in abundance every day, and, thank God, I believe we are also carrying out a true apostolate through brief replies and timely messages.

Thursday, November 15, 1979.

I forgot to mention that yesterday I received a phone call from the Presidential Palace. It was Colonel Majano simply to say hello and express his solidarity, having learned of the death threats I had received. He also wanted to let me know that they are very optimistic about the situation in the country and that they believe their plan for the necessary changes and for a government that responds to the people's demands will be consolidated.

I congratulated them,I came back to lifeAnd I also told them that the Church was always ready to serve the people and that, in this sense, they could always count on the Church. Just as I would have the freedom to denounce anything that offended the human rights of our people.

On this day, Thursday the 15th, I traveled to Candelaria de Cuscatlán, where Father Salvador Interiano had invited me to preside over the patronal feast of the Sweet Name of Mary, celebrated there on this date. I preached to them, in the spirit of Puebla, how devotion to the Virgin is part of our Latin American identity, but that it is a devotion that must be brought to life, just as Puebla also proclaims, for the present and future, a Mary who inspires the suffering of our people, not passively, but with the spiritual energy to

give pain a sense of redemption and to support God's plan to transform injustices into a more fraternal and just order.

We then spoke with Father Modesto López, rector of the Cathedral, who was present, and we had lunch together; a sense of brotherhood that I hope will continue to grow among us priests.

Upon my return to the hospital, I was informed of several phone calls, which I attempted to answer, particularly those from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the pastors of the Baptist Church, who are undoubtedly very excited about the arrival of Dr. Lara Braun next Sunday.

I also had a meeting with a psychologist, Dr. Semsch, whom I haven't seen for a few days. His sessions are very helpful in verbalizing my problems, which, with his help, I try to resolve more calmly and confidently.

Friday, November 16, 1979.

Several groups of people who felt harmed by acts of violence by left-wing extremist groups have come to the Archbishop's Palace. Apparently, the left has become more repressive than the repression it had previously denounced. We expressed our solidarity with all these workers, who have suffered serious consequences for their family and economic situations.

At noon, we celebrated a beautiful Mass for peace in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, sponsored by the Parish Committee of the Basilica. During the homily, a woman,

Lidia de Pineda, gave a profound and heartfelt speech on peace. I emphasized the meaning of peace that she had conveyed and invited the laity to, like this example, bring the messages of Christianity to the world. And I seized the opportunity. Emphasizing devotion to the Virgin of Peace, as mediator of this great gift that our people need.

I had lunch with the Jesuit Fathers, where we discussed mainly the current situation in the country and the role of the Church.

The Major Seminary closed today, and I couldn't attend the Mass I'd been invited to, but I went on behalf of Father Cortés because at the same time, at six o'clock in the evening, we were having a meeting with some members of the Board of Directors and others from the Christian Democrats to analyze and provide assistance to the new government. It was a very interesting meeting. Colonel Majano arrived, and we frankly presented our views, which were greatly appreciated as a contribution to the government.

This meeting was formalized as an emergency meeting, whenever advice was needed, and also on a weekly basis to work on identifying urgent goals and projects in our area to support the Board of Directors and, above all, to accelerate the structural changes the country needs.

That afternoon, Dr. Jorge Lara Braun arrived from New York, bearing a message from the National Council of Churches for our archdiocese, which he will present next Sunday during Mass in the Basilica at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, November 17, 1979.

In the hospital, I had an interview with a Dutch journalist. Afterward, I went to Santa Tecla. In the parish of El Calvario, we held a vicariate meeting, which was also attended by Dr. Lara Braun, who praised the pastoral work of our Archdiocese. I presented the pastoral letter, which was the subject of group reflection, and then, in plenary session, we drew very practical conclusions on how the Church can serve the current situation in our country. The Carmelites came to expose themselves. a situation from his own congregation, which we treat with considerable understanding.

In the afternoon, I celebrated Mass at the Chalatenango Relocation Center. A thousand families were relocated into three relocation groups, and a large number of people attended...

In the morning, I had an interview with a Dutch journalist. That morning, I went to the Church of Calvary in Santa Tecla, where priests, nuns, and lay people from the Vicariate of La Libertad were gathering. The central theme was the presentation of my Fourth Pastoral Letter, which was then the subject of group reflection and concluded with a plenary session with very practical applications for the pastoral life of that vicariate. Dr. Jorge Lara Braun, who came from the United States with a message to our Archdiocese from the National Council of Churches, also participated.

In the afternoon, I went to celebrate Mass at the Chalatenango Relocation Center, where nearly a thousand families have settled after losing their lands and homes in the Cerrón Grande flood. Today's feast day is that of Saint Teresa, patron saint of their former canton, now affected by the floods. Dr. Lara also participated in the homily, and there was a very warm welcome and a fraternal atmosphere with the Christians, who gave wonderful testimonies at the microphone after the Mass.

CHAPTER 22.

Year 1979.

Diary from November 18th to December 23rd.

1979.

Sunday, November 18, 1979.

Mass was always held in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, and after Mass, there was an interview with a television journalist, I believe Swiss. In the afternoon, I went to celebrate the blessing of the chapel of the El Carmen Canton, in the parish of Santo Tomás. Father Teodoro Alvarenga, the priest who has presided over that parish for over twenty-five years, is highly esteemed, and the people are very attached to the Church;This I had a welcomeTruly ecclesial. I felt like a pastor, and the pastor's affection resonates wonderfully with these rural people, as well as with those who come from the villages.

A meeting with the young soldiers was scheduled that day, but I couldn't attend due to my visit to Santo Tomás. I asked Father Estrada to represent us.

Monday, November 19, 1979.

This morning and afternoon, the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador also held a meeting to elect its new leadership. First, the Nuncio greeted the bishops and called for unity, as he had failed to achieve greater unity among them during his time in the Nunciature. He offered to spend his final days, believing he must complete his mandate early next year, doing everything possible to foster this unity. To this end, he recommended the appointment of two bishops, specifically Rivera and Bishop Revelo, to form a coalition.commission that will work for the unity of the bishops.

But then the bishops, mainly Aparicio and Álvarez, rejected this proposal of the Nuncio, which I, for my part, supported and said that it was convenient to appoint her and that she would also work before proceeding to the elections, that the climate was not favorable, since we were polarized and there would be no possibility of the elections being united, but rather,and will break more unity.

In fact, the elections were held, and the procedure was highly biased and arbitrary. Therefore, the majority-Aparicio, Álvarez,Revealed,Barrera did what he wanted with the vote.

In the election of the president, the procedure was canonical and an absolute majority was not obtained in the first three ballots, but in the eighth, Monsignor Rivera obtained a small relative majority, which unfortunately we did not observe in time, but after the ninth ballot, the ninth, when the canon was read and I noted that, in the eighth ballot, this relative majority had been obtained in favor of Monsignor Rivera.

However, since he was not an accepted candidate the majority it was communicated that the communication was already untimely and a tenth ballot was held,

during which Monsignor Álvarez was elected by a relative majority and was assigned the office of president.

But on my part I wrote a letter to the Nuncio In order to send it to the Congregation for Bishops, reporting this anomaly, which vitiated the entire conduct of a new president, elected in such an arbitrary manner.

The other positions, very important commissions, were assigned according to the opinion of this majority and of the additional vote available to the president, who had arrogated to Monsignor Álvarez, as the new president. For my part, in that letter to the Nuncio, I asked that the anomaly be corrected and that the presidency be entrusted to the person who canonically corresponds to it, namely Monsignor Rivera, who, moreover, is a more suitable, more conciliatory person to promote unity, as well as more prudent and intelligent to give a new face to a conference that is highly discredited and is becoming discredited above all.under the presidency of a bishop clearly marked by his political and social position with the previous government and by his imprudent and superficial criteria, in judgments that do not well represent the Salvadoran episcopate.

I hope my letter will receive a response, but at least my disagreement with this procedure will be recorded on the record.

Tuesday, November 20, 1979.

The Executive Council of the Archbishopric met to specifically discuss the construction of the archiepiscopal residence and the offices of the Archbishopric. The project is planned for the land adjacent to the Seminary, on the eastern side. The

architects presented a highly functional and practical plan, based on which they will apply for funding, which is already being approved by the European institutions.

Then I went to a meeting with the Vicariate of Soyapango. Almost all the priests, religious communities, faithful, and lay people involved in pastoral work were present. In the conversation with the Bishop, the political and pastoral issues emerged.To clarify byFor my part, I am concerned about the excessive politicization of some communities and some pastoral workers.

That evening there was an interview with Father Rafael Moreno, about whom I have some doubts despite his loyalty to the service, but who lately has concerned me because of his excessive partiality towards grassroots political organizations.

I had dinner with engineer Román Mayorga Quirós, a member of the Revolutionary Government Junta. In a very confidential atmosphere, he spoke to me about the Junta's plans and work, and how it has already managed to become more united and develop a political awareness of the structural changes needed. He seemed quite optimistic, and I also felt that my hope for this change, despite the enormous initial shortcomings and the opposition's criticism, was well-founded. Therefore, I pray to the Lord, and with this intention in mind, I will make my pilgrimage to Our Lady of Peace on her feast day, tomorrow, November 21st.

Wednesday, November 21, 1979.

Day of Our Lady of Peace. And I went to participate in the concelebration with the other brother bishops in St. Michael's Cathedral. The Cathedral was packed, the broadcast

was broadcast on the radio, and, frankly, I felt deeply regretted that the homily, which could have been a message to this people hungry for guidance and inspiration, was greatly undermined by the Nuncio's very feeble and abstract homily.

I respect your responsibility and your mission, but frankly, the Church's prophetic role was not fulfilled here, on such a beautiful occasion as the celebration of the country's patron saint, before a people in need of a more vibrant, vivid, and profound message.

I have always noticed a desire within the Episcopate to marginalize me; but the people, on the other hand, gave me a warm ovation as I left the Church, something I already sensed, and that is why I remained last, so as not to offend my brothers who left more privately with this kind of popular rivalry. I thank the people and feel not vanity, but joy in joining in the sentiments of a people who expect ever deeper solidarity from their prophets and pastors.

Thursday, November 22, 1979.

I wrote a letter to Engineer Pacheco, who borders the property of the Hospital of Divine Providence, to support the long-standing request of the nuns of this hospital to help establish the boundaries of the nuns' property, since the engineer has introduced his own boundaries on this property.

I made him understand that what was being asked of him was not charity, but a right of justice, and that, even in the context of charity, it was worth helping this center, which is suffering as much as the hospital's patients. Therefore, I begged him to help me bring this conflict to an end soon. Making him understand that otherwiseWe should

publicly denounce their maneuvers, which have already caused considerable damage to the hospital.

At 9:30, we began the Pastoral Commission meeting. It was interesting to hear the reports from each vicariate, as they demonstrate remarkable activity in the various sectors of our diocese. There is much creativity, a true blessing of the Spirit of God among us, but the main focus of our meeting was the study of a statement published by a group of priests, nuns, and lay people from basic ecclesial communities and parishes across the Republic.

It's anonymous because no one takes responsibility for their signature, and, examining the current political climate, it sometimes draws offensive and negative conclusions about our Church. It's been explained as an attempt to shed light on the confusion.

There were very valuable defenses, such as that of Father Fabián, of Monsignor Urioste, of Father Torruella,from some nuns and others. But there was also a defense of the criteria of this document. For my part, I emphasized that it seemed more like a political analysis than a pastoral document, and I urged us to commit ourselves to building the Church, not politics. In this sense, I asked for the utmost sincerity and trust from the Archbishop; and above all, from those who make up this group of the Pastoral Commission, so that, united in the unity of the criteria, we can work to build the Kingdom and from there shed light on the diverse realities of the country.

The discussion was very fruitful and, despite some heated moments, the confidence with which sincere opinions were expressed in this difficult area of faith and politics prevailed.

In the afternoon I received a visit from a member of the MNR political party and an old friend, Arturo Gallegos, who told me about an invitation from the Government of Nicaragua and we discussed the reason for this invitation and I explained to them that, until I had a better understanding of the relations of that Government with the hierarchy of that country, I could not undertake a trip, even if it meant accepting an invitation, out of respect and solidarity with my brother bishops and that, in any case,I would like to consult.

Arturo Gallegos expressed his concern to me that the government have a consultative and technical office to create an environment in line with the mystique of the Revolution initiated by the military after the October 15 coup.

I tried to understand the whole scope of this initiative and offered my support, but at the same time I expressed the Church's continued independence and its inability to identify, even in its desire to collaborate, with any specific political movement. This was in the spirit of educating the people and raising civic awareness, and we willingly did so and will continue to do so. I promised to arrange an audience for him with a member of the Board of Directors so they could speak directly with him.

That night, Beto Cuéllar of the Legal Aid Department came to inform me with great emotion that they had found, next to the Treasury Police sentry box, a cellar where several prisoners had evidently been tortured, the marks of which were written on the wall. And that, like this unexpected encounter, there were undoubtedly other clandestine prisons that violated the Constitution under the previous regime.

I encouraged Cuéllar to continue this investigation and to duly report to the Investigative Commission as a contribution from our Church.

Friday, November 23, 1979.

This morning the Senate of the Presbyterates met. We prioritized analyzing the Church's action in the country's political situation and considered the statement of a group of priests, which seemed more political than pastoral. I was very pleased to sense the solidarity of the majority of the senators and to discover, providentially, priests who align themselves more with the political views of grassroots organizations than with the pastoral work of our Church.

I expressed my deep feeling as a pastor that I do not have the sincerity of some of my closest collaborators and urged that, together, and for the good of the Church, we can build the Kingdom of God. And from that Kingdom of God, which we have deeply felt in faith, we can better shed light on the political realities and the good of this society of our homeland.

Various points of interest to the clergy were addressed, and it was a very constructive meeting. In the afternoon, I attended a meeting of catechists from the catechumenal movement at the Rinaldi Institute in Planes de Renderos.

I celebrated Holy Mass and expressed my joy in seeing this movement flourish and, taking advantage of the Pope's document in the catechesis, I asked them to try in his life of uniting the catechumenate with the sacramental life, with the community, a service of the people of God to our society, yes they will also unite the catechumenate with the

kerygma, that is, the announcement that should have brought us to encounter Christ, but which did not occur in our baptism, nor in our previous life, we should try to make it from now on a continuous encounter with the Lord, so that the kerygma and catechesis play their true role in the evangelization of our lives and of those with whom we must share fraternal coexistence.

Upon my return, I met with Colonel Abdul Gutiérrez, a member of the Revolutionary Government Junta, in the hospital with Dr. Saca. We cordially shared intimate details about the government itself. Colonel Gutiérrez, the main agent of the coup, even told me very intimate details of that day, October 15th. I was therefore surprised and pleased by the confidentiality with which they discussed this matter.

I also took the opportunity to express my initiatives, ensuring that this difficult time for the nation is handled with the utmost common sense and balance, as so many dangers are threatening to destroy our people's hopes for liberation. Colonel Gutiérrez shared these concerns with me, but also his confidence that God will help us emerge from this safe and sound. In particular, we discussed the division that some military personnel seem to be trying to create between the two military leaders of the government.

He said it was possible, but that they were also doing everything possible to ensure nothing separated them, because a split between the two could be fatal, both for the Army and for the country. I also expressed my concern for the missing persons and offered the Legal Aid Office's cooperation, as we are doing, and so on. I think it was a very useful conversation, as well as a very long one.

Saturday, November 24, 1979.

Today I devoted myself to preparing the homily, but among the correspondence I received the news that the University of Louvain has agreed to grant me an honorary degree, and that this title will be conferred on me on February 2nd, the patron saint's day of that University, along with two other men, a man and a woman, who have distinguished themselves with this honor for their intellectual abilities and social commitment. I have also been asked to deliver the address for that session.

Father Juan Deplanck Lencho, who was undoubtedly the most interested in this matter, also wrote to me telling me not to refuse and to respond urgently, and that he would help me in any way necessary.

I thanked God for this new testimony of his love and encouragement. Father Rafael Urrutia, who translated the French for me, also sent me a congratulatory note, which was very encouraging because it encourages our efforts to provide a liberating pastoral ministry. I believe I must accept it, as it is not only a personal honor, but also an encouragement to a cause that greatly needs support in the Church.

In the evening, we reviewed the week's events with Father Moreno, Monsignor Urioste, and the bachelor Cuéllar. It was an extremely busy week, which I will discuss in my homily tomorrow.

Sunday, November 25, 1979.

I celebrated Mass in the Basilica. It is the feast of Christ the King. We made the consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as Pope Pius XI recommended when he instituted this feast. At the same time, in that Basilica where we have celebrated several Sundays due to the obstacles caused by the occupation of the Cathedral, we recited this prayer in farewell, as I announced that next Sunday, to begin the liturgical year, we will celebrate again in the Cathedral. And only if another obstacle arises will we return to this Church or to another free one.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, the confirmations took place in the Church of the Heart of Mary. A wonderful group of young people was formed by the parish priests of that vicariate. I was very surprised that the priests of the Church, the Claretians, did not appear at the liturgy. I must ask for an explanation.

In the afternoon, at the parish of San Francisco in Mejicanos, I attended the religious profession of two Passionists. These young men have dedicated their lives to this congregation. The Provincial of Central America was also present.and the Father Juan Macho, parish priest, and other Passionists and other nuns, also Passionists.

A very pleasant meeting was held afterwards in the nearby Domus Mariae, but I was unable to attend in full.

Monday, November 26, 1979.

This morning I went to Chalatenango. At the Minor Seminary, an interesting course is being held for late-arriving vocations, to assess their cultural level and promote appropriate formation to prepare them for the priesthood to which they still aspire. These

aren't very advanced in years, but rather young men who already believed the priesthood was impossible for them, and I was deeply impressed by the testimony of dedication and joy I see in them at realizing the possibility of realizing their ideals.

I visited the community of the Sisters of the Assumption in Chalatenango and, once again, met with the Passionists in the parish of San Francisco. I had hoped to see the Provincial Superior, but unfortunately he wasn't there. I did, however, have a very interesting conversation with Father Juan.

Tuesday, November 27, 1979.

I interviewed the Swedish ambassador, who was interested in the situation in the country and the role of the Church. Another interesting interview was with an Argentine social communications expert in Mexico, and another gentleman, also expelled from Uruguay, who is also in Mexico. He specializes in radio creativity and collaborates with Cerpal. They were interested in meeting me and asking me about what they said they valued during Sunday Mass: communicating with the public.

"Sometimes," I told them, "you don't realize those technical aspects that are familiar to you, but you know that the grace of the Holy Spirit guides His Church and makes His Word fruitful. I attribute to this all the success you believe you found in that homily, as in all my pastoral work. I trust in the Holy Spirit and try to be His instrument, to love people and serve them sincerely, starting from the Gospel." The conversation was very interesting and touched on other topics related to the reality of our country.

This morning's meeting was packed with activities, particularly the meeting organized by the Pastoral Commission and the Presbyteral Senate to study, together with other priests, the Church's approach to the country's current political situation. In light of these principles, the document published by a group of priests, which strongly criticizes the Church's stance, was analyzed. Clearly, this approach is more political than pastoral.

The discussion was very thorough. We spoke frankly, and it became clear that, for many priests and communities, the political aspects were of greater concern. We tried to orient the issue directly towards pastoral commitment and a sign of unity amid this multifaceted variety of political parties and organizations.

In the afternoon, I visited the group of nuns involved in pastoral work and spiritual retreats in Planes de Renderos, under the guidance of Father Rafael Moreno. We spoke all afternoon, especially about the challenging aspects of pastoral work in such a politicized environment, but I tried to tell them, with complete frankness, that we must be courageous in bringing the Gospel message and be a true Church, a Church that does not live in opportunistic circumstances or fear diversity, because it preaches the Kingdom of God, which seeks to illuminate the realities of the earth.

It was fascinating to see this group of women from different congregations feel so united in their pastoral work. And this was one of the confessions I appreciated most: that they feel the Archdiocese's direction is so clearly defined that they always feel they are on the right path, each with a mature Christian spirit.

That evening I went to dinner at Mr. Viéytez's house, where Dr. Chávez, Monsignor Urioste, Father Ellacuría, and Father Estrada were also present. We discussed

current politics and the role of the Church, focusing primarily on the specific situation of the Government Junta and the government in general.

Wednesday, November 28, 1979.

In my radio interview today, I recalled that today is the anniversary of the assassination of Father Ernesto Barrera, and that nine years ago, also on this day, the first priest to die in this way in our Archdiocese was assassinated: Father Nicolás Rodríguez. At the request of Archbishop Chávez, I went with other priests to pick him up near San Antonio Los Ranchos, in Chalatenango.

In commemoration of these two anniversaries, a solemn Mass was celebrated this afternoon at the parish of San Sebastián in Ciudad Delgado, where Father Neto Barrera was parish priest at the time of his assassination. It was a beautiful Mass, beginning with a very cordial meeting that Father Gutiérrez organized for me at the entrance to the city of Ciudad Delgado. A joyful and cordial welcome, and an equally enthusiastic Mass.

There were some confirmations, and I took the opportunity to say how the people of God, anointed by the sacraments and among whom their priests stand out in their service to the people, oblige them to provide a priestly service to the people, which cannot be confused with other services of a merely political nature and which therefore must have a distinction, a holiness as Christ desires, precisely so that it can be more effective in the work of liberating the people.

There were quite a few of them this morning: Visits of journalists and others, priests, and seminarians. Rubén Zamora's wife, Doña Ester, offered her services free of charge in the secretariats of our Archdiocese.

We took the opportunity to have her work at the Secretariat for Social Communications and also in the Archbishop's Private Office. She started work this afternoon.

That same day, a search was also carried out at the convent of San Martín. The police had received information that Father Tilo Sánchez was in possession of weapons and would recover them, but they agreed to notify the Archbishop, who called Father Tilo to inform him of the accusation. He volunteered to go with a police officer and a witness from the Curia to inspect his convent. This was done, as the police information proved false, as there were no weapons in the convent.

I took the opportunity to thank the police for this more prudent procedure than in the past, and to say that in every conflict, I would like this preventive dialogue to always take place, which would thus avoid things that would have been very serious if the Church's intervention had not been taken into account. The police also understood and said that they were grateful and agreed to proceed in this way also on subsequent occasions.

.

Monsignor Urioste went to the airport to meet Monsignor Stehle of Adveniat, but he didn't arrive; he will likely arrive late this evening. In any case, we are expecting him and we thank Adveniat and the new programs we can rely on for their support. Monsignor Stehle's visit was announced as a gesture of solidarity with our Church. He will also visit Nicaragua to offer Adveniat's valuable services.

Thursday, November 29, 1979.

This morning, at the Archbishop's Palace, I met with the Secretary General of the UDN political party. He is a Marxist and had very complimentary words for the Church's work. He said it was very different from other times, when his Marxism called the Church "the opium of the people." Now, on the contrary, the Church was its best promoter of revival, and much of what was happening in the country for the sake of transformation was the Church's work.

He wanted to propose a dialogue with me to find ways to collaborate in solving the country's problems.

We agreed that we would have this dialogue next Monday and indicated the people they would invite.

There was an interview with a Colombian journalist who writes for North American newspapers.

At lunch, at the home of Mrs. Aída de Muyshondt, with a group of Ladies of Charity, I celebrated Holy Mass,per the eternal TheThe burial place of several of these women's deceased relatives. And during lunch and discussion, very constructive ideas were shared about Caritas, which will have a nun as its director and nuns as visitors, who share this charisma of clarity and commitment in our community.

In the afternoon, I visited the Eucharistic Sisters who were on their spiritual retreat. About thirty of us shared dinner and then a very interesting time of sharing, during which I answered several questions. I managed to convince them to join in the catechism classes at the Cathedral and to help us support the liturgy of our Sunday Mass.

This evening I went to visit Fernando Valero Iglesias. He's preparing for surgery at home because his lungs have been found to be quite serious. I tried to encourage him and thank him for his generous contribution.

Friday, November 30, 1979.

This morning I had a very important meeting with the editors of Radio Ysax's commentaries. A letter from Monsignor Urioste to Father Ellacuría asking him to be deemed responsible for these programs prompted a response letter in which they made clear their support for the archdiocese and that they did not want to be separated from this work related to the archbishopric.

This was the main point of discussion throughout the meeting, from which very clear ideas emerged, although there were some resentments. However, I believe that, overall, the meeting was positive, as everyone, both lay people and priests present, will continue to work and seek ways to align themselves with the Archbishop's thinking without appearing to be an official voice of the Church, which is the crux of the problem.

This morning, the Seminary Commission also held a meeting, where several points regarding the relationships and lives of seminarians were analyzed. It seems there is a fundamental problem, an ideological one that is causing turmoil even in some

communities, where the true concept of the Church is being lost. We will strive to be very faithful to the theological thought of the Church and to align the work of the Diocese and the Seminary with this thought.

Monsignor Emilio Stehle de Adveniat came. We had lunch with him at the Hospital of Divine Providence.

We visited the group of nuns who are doing the exercises in Planes de Renderos. He shared with them and we thanked him for the fact that, thanks to Adveniat, we can carry out this religious work. And we talked to him about the other programs, and he, above all, expressed solidarity with our Archdiocese. He also visited Uca and the Cathedral, and there is hope for support for these projects.

That evening, Father Estrada had organized a dinner with a humble and respectable family, composed of professors from the University of California, where they had also brought a peasant couple, overjoyed to meet their parish priest. The two couples and the two priests shared a very close bond, a modest dinner, and, above all, a very cordial friendship.

Saturday, December 1, 1979.

I celebrated the closing mass of the Schools of Faith and Joy in the Chapel of the Externado San José.

A good group of five men's and women's academies presented the fruits of their promotional work there.

A representative from Misereor also came, and we spoke with him, along with Father Ramón Vega, who is already with us, and Monsignor Urioste, about the numerous financial contributions that this institution, Misereor, is providing us.

This afternoon I visited the Diocese of Santiago de María, where the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation began yesterday. This day, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and women, has also been consecrated to the second bishop, and he will celebrate the Eucharist in this context.

That evening, a beautiful, dramatic reenactment of the martyrdom of Thomas More was held, in which several priests and lay people actively participated. Father Majano, Father Rodas, Father Cabrera, and other close friends of the clergy, among whom I had worked for two years, welcomed me warmly, as did Monsignor Rivera and many lay people of that community.

Sunday, December 2, 1979.

After a very cool night in Santiago de María, although its silence was broken by the Popular Revolutionary Block, which spent the entire night singing and haranguing in the Central Park, we awoke to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this diocese. A joyful dawn lit up the streets, and after sharing the intimacy of prayer and breakfast with Archbishop Rivera, we went to the Cathedral, where we met with the other bishops and all the clergy of the diocese, along with the numerous pilgrims from various parishes.

The Holy Mass was solemnly celebrated; Father Majano gave a very appropriate and eloquent homily, in which we paraded the bishops who had the honor and joy of governing that diocese.

After the Mass, the diplomas of the Municipality and the Diocese were presented to Bishop Machado, who was Bishop of San Miguel when this part of the Diocese of San Miguel was returned to form the new Diocese of Santiago de María. Bishop Machado had been brought there especially from his retreat in Santiago Nonualco. Also present were Bishop Chávez y González, who was Metropolitan when this division of the diocese took place, and the other serving bishops. A silver platter was presented to Bishop Rivera, as the bishop who celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Diocese.

After the Mass, the president of the Episcopal Conference, Monsignor Álvarez, called an emergency meeting, during which some doubts regarding the appointment of the president and the new positions were clarified. I submitted my complaint to the Nuncio, who had convened this meeting through the president of CEDES. Monsignor Aparicio also invoked an irregularity in his favor.

My request was in favor of Monsignor Rivera, who had a relative majority that was not taken into consideration and, therefore, the presidency of Monsignor Álvarez was illegitimate.

However, I myself have proposed that, pro bono pacis, things remain as they are, but that the state of Our protest. After a discussion that left me, as always, embittered in my relations with the Episcopal Conference, since a personal resentment towards me was evident, nevertheless, offering everything to the Lord, I went to a meeting at the College of Santa Gemma de Alludere, where we were also offered a good lunch.

Upon returning to San Salvador, I NeI various problems.The Archbishop is being asked to intervene on behalf of the South African Embassy to determine whether their Ambassador, captured a few days ago, can be released from captivity. I was thanked for my written and radio interventions on behalf of the Ambassador and against all the violence devastating the country. The Nuncio in Santiago de María also congratulated me and said, "It couldn't have gone better."

Another topic. An interview with the Jesuit Provincial Father and Father Moreno, specifically to discuss ideologies within our Church. They were very understanding, and the dialogue developed with a wide range of perspectives and the search for true advocacy during this difficult time for the country.

Father Moreno, despite his many prejudices, is a man of the Church and is well-suited to the Archbishop's advice. Precisely for this reason, it is necessary to understand the ideology, mentality, and strategy of the popular political organizations he understands, and, I believe, with true ecclesial judgment. He will therefore continue to be a consultant, but at the same time he will complement it with other criteria to achieve a comprehensive assessment of reality. I have proposed convening Father Moreno, Monsignor Urioste, Father Fabián, Father Octavio Ortiz, and Walter Guerra, for this meeting of opinions.

Another problem is the occupation by grassroots organizations supporting the Zacatecoluca Cotton Cooperative. The Governor contacted me, requesting the Archbishop's support to go early tomorrow morning to negotiate with the occupiers and prevent the potential violence that is expected to occur. I asked Father Cortés to go, along

with the Legal Assistance Unit, represented by Beto Cuéllar, and they were happy to offer their assistance.

Finally, it was almost eleven o'clock at night, and a priest from the Episcopal Secretariat of Los Teques, Venezuela, where Father Roberto Trejos, a Salvadoran, is located, was waiting for me. The priest had come to ask me, on behalf of the Bishop of that diocese, to allow Father Trejos to continue, given that he is carrying out important pastoral work there.

I told him that I had a great need for priests and that they could come immediately, that a call had been made to everyone, but that I left it to the discretion of the Father and the Bishop whether it was useful to extend their stay for a reasonable period of time, and that I consider the missionary nature, or the simple fact of communion of our Church with the diocese of Los Teques, an honor.

The priest left very satisfied and, after some general conversations with the bishops and former Venezuelan colleagues, said goodbye; he was accompanied by Father Gregorio Rosa, rector of the San José de la Montaña seminary.

Monday, December 3, 1979.

I invited to breakfast with me the Minister of Foreign Affairs, our friend Héctor Dada, Father Pepe Simán, Father Jerez, Provincial of the Jesuits, Father Estrada, and Monsignor Urioste, to try to persuade Mr. Dada to take advantage of his authority as Chancellor, so that in his relations with the Holy See he will inform and, as a Christian, solicit collaboration with the pastoral line of Puebla and Medellín, which the Archdiocese

seeks to follow. In this regard, we should openly discuss the actions of the Nuncio and some bishops, who are very distant from this pastoral line.

The conversation was very interesting, since, in addition to his authority as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dada affirmed that he would also act as a Christian man who deeply shares the concerns of the Church.

Perhaps he will send Father Pepe Simán on a special mission to bring solid information, suggestions, and specific pleas for our hierarchical Church. They discussed in particular the military vicariate, which has not functioned as it should in its pastoral function, as well as the attitudes of some other bishops toward the government and the economic leadership, and the disunity, especially, within the hierarchy.

In the morning, the Provincial Sister of the Good Shepherd arrived, announcing that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, who had worked for so long in the women's prison, would have to withdraw due to internal difficulties within the prison and the Ministry of Justice, as well as a lack of sufficient personnel to carry out this ministry.

I was very sorry for this separation from such a needy environment, but she offered this and would collaborate withPrison ministry, not only in the women's prison, but also in the other prisons of the Archdiocese. I strongly urged her to undertake this task and asked her to provide all the support she desired for such a needy sector as that of prisoners.

Among today's interviews, I received one from a Polish writer and journalist, who was very interested. Knowing TheThe Church's perspective on the situation of violence

in the country. He has written several books and, more than a journalist, is a writer who studies these situations.

Another very important interview was with Dr. Calvani and other Latin American members of the Christian Democrats, who spoke with me about the Church's position and their party's political activity. It's interesting to know that there are so many human and Christian talents among the laity for the development of our Latin America.

That evening, the meeting of the various members of the Popular Forum was also very interesting. They came to Divine Providence Hospital to speak with me. I had Father Estrada and Father Ellacuría as advisors, and we discussed very important points regarding the government's attitude and how to foster political and civic spirit among our people. I offered my assistance to the media, particularly radio and newspapers, and they expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity to educate the people.

Today I prepared the recording for next Wednesday, because tomorrow I plan to take a short vacation in Guatemala.

Tuesday, December 4, 1979.

I sent some letters. I addressed various matters, particularly the requests to be submitted to Adveniat, Misereor, and other European aid institutions for Latin America, since Archbishop Urioste will personally address these requests during his trip to the Netherlands the day after tomorrow, along with Archbishop Rivera. Archbishop Stehle, director of Adveniat, and Dr. Córdova, director of Misereor, also personally inspected the

request. These requests have been submitted previously and will be renewed, as will other new projects.

After this morning, which was very intense, in the afternoon I left for Guatemala, where I will spend this week, which will culminate on Saturday,at the profession of the Carmelite nuns in their retreat at Carmel Juyú.

We arrived in Guatemala tonight. I heard the good what makes one short break in the midst of all the frenzy of our ministry.

Wednesday, December 5, 1979.

This morning, in Guatemala, I visited the Loyola bookstore, where I found several very timely books. I also met several Guatemalan priests who expressed their deep appreciation and affection. I thanked the Lord and them for this testimony of fraternity, which, thank God, is still appreciated in other countries where one might think it is less well-known.

We hiked from Guatemala to the Carmelite nuns' property, about three hours away. It was a picturesque road, especially when we reached Lake Atitlán, on whose shores this splendid house sits. We arrived at night. I celebrated Mass with the very friendly Carmelite community; they welcomed me warmly, and after Mass we had dinner and shared fond memories of life in their congregation and especially in El Salvador, for which I am deeply grateful, as they welcomed me into one of their homes, the Divine Providence Hospital, which houses practically my entire family.

Thursday 6, Friday 7 and Saturday 8 December 1979.

Three days of this summit, which the Carmelites have named Carmel Juyú because it is located in a canton called Juyú, in the jurisdiction of Panajachel, near Lake Amatitlán in Guatemala. The novices, preparing to make their vows on the eighth day, are the center of this community's affection.

Some nuns accompanied me to visit the city of Chichicastenango, whose traditions date back to indigenous paganism, as evidenced by the Christian temple itself, where healers and faithful, each in their own way, burn incense, offer prayers, and express their intentions to the city's patron saint through petals of various colors, which they perhaps confuse with their pagan idols. It is a popular religion. Really interesting.

On the eighth day, we celebrated Mass in honor of the Immaculate Virgin, during which the six new Carmelite nuns made their profession. The Superior General of the Congregation was present, along with a large number of nuns from Mexico and Central America. I celebrated and expressed in my homily my admiration for this place and my hierarchical service to religious life. The Vicar General and a Carmelite Father concelebrated.

On Saturday afternoon I returned to El Salvador and after a four hour journey,I had a session withFather Moreno, with Beto Cuéllar, with the Vicar General, Father Cortez, the chancellor Father Brito, who has already returned from his health trip inform me and take the criteria for my homily on the life of the country this week in which I have been absent.

Sunday, December 9, 1979.

Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral. There weren't many people at first, but when we left, the Cathedral was, as usual, packed. The second Sunday of Advent inspired me to speak about the theme: "God saves the people in their history," and he needs the people of that people to save the world; communities that, like John the Baptist, don't identify with political movements, but illuminate them all, as well as all the concerns of the people.

After the Mass, a group of journalists and commentators gathered to discuss the topics covered in the homily and other aspects of the Church's mission in El Salvador.

I went at 11:30 to share communion with the First Communion children and their parents, catechists from the Parish of Divine Providence, Colonia Atlacatl, a truly lively atmosphere.

I congratulated the Redemptorist Fathers; I expressed my pleasure at the event to the catechists and all the parish staff; and I addressed a brief message to the many boys and girls receiving their First Communion. I had lunch with the Fathers.

At four in the afternoon, I arrived at the El Espino neighborhood of the parish of San Pedro Perulapán, where Father Solórzano had gathered a large crowd to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception that Sunday. I had the opportunity to receive a genuine catechesis, both through Mass and the homily. I was very satisfied; the priest himself and several lay people expressed, at the end, their desire to work for the evangelization of our people.

That evening, I attended the closing ceremony of the Christianity Course for women, held in Planes de Renderos. There was great faith, and this new encounter with Jesus Christ sparked great enthusiasm. I took the opportunity to point out that the Cursillo and its charism of conversion and first encounter with Christ are just one aspect of the many elements of evangelization, and that they should strive to put the other aspects into practice for their evangelization to be complete.

Me referee InIn particular, to catechesis or the more systematic study of religion, to the sacraments, which are the signs of our belonging to a community; the community that works not for itself, nor for a small group of courses, but for the entire parish and the entire diocese and apostolate; whoever evangelizes must evangelize others. It is a beautiful group of women, from this capital, from Jucuapa, Santiago de María, Santa Elena, and Jocoro.

Monday, December 10, 1979.

I spent the morning with the Dominican nuns at Fatima College, where the Superior General is based and the Chapter is being held to elect the new provincial. She was elected. The previous provincial, Mother Nieves, has truly accomplished a great deal and is deeply loved and cared for. There are several young nuns who offer hope of sharing the lives of our people.

I congratulated them on their conduct, which I witnessed during the election: unity and, at the same time, humility on the part of the new provincial, who asked to postpone the election because he had something to present to the Superior General, who is among

us. After an hour of reflection, the election was approved, and the new provincial expressed his willingness to serve the congregation.

We then sang the Te Deum, during which I expressed my congratulations and my hope that this congregation will continue to carry out valuable pastoral services in our archdiocese.

In the afternoon, I went to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the religious life of Sister Nelly Rodríguez and two other Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and the 50th anniversary of Mariíta, a lay Oblate. The families of these sisters had gathered at the Sacred Heart School, and we concelebrated with Father Isidro. In my homily, I expressed the value of religious consecration and how vows are an indicator of the social solutions of our time. The separation from our religious vows gives us a true sense of the irrationality of certain extremisms of our time.

Before going to dinner at the home of Sister Nelly's brother, Dr. Abraham Rodriguez, I returned to the Divine Providence Hospital where two young soldiers urgently needed me to express The my WorryDue to certain attitudes within their own military corporation, they have expressed their discontent in particular with the Minister of Defense, who is an ally from the past and jeopardizes the mysticism of renewal that characterizes young soldiers.

For my part, I have prudently expressed the support that the Church gives to all that is just and all that is renewing, and urgedThey were the protagonists of this temporary moment in the Government and they should have acted according to their conscience. They promised to continue to visit me and other staff soldiers who, I've

heard, have great faith in my word. I will always strive to uphold the integrity of our diocese's pastoral policy.

.

There was also a previous interview with the community of Zacamil, which has stopped distributing our newspaper Orientación and expressed its deep discontent with the current direction of this weekly. They feel targeted when we talk about divisions in the Church and groups that are more political than ecclesiastical. I have tried to address all their concerns and complaints.

I sincerely expressed to them the pastoral ministry of our Archdiocese and invited them to continue the dialogue with the leaders of La Prensa and the radio station, and I believe this dialogue was very positive. They left satisfied with the opportunity to discuss and express their thoughts, but also to listen to other perspectives.

Tuesday, December 11, 1979.

The community of Zacamil, as I had invited the evening before, came to meet with the editors of the newspaper Orientación and Radio Ysax. I was unable to attend in person, but I instructed the Vicar General, Father Cortés, to coordinate an interview and conduct it, with very calm means, in a reflection that opened the door to dialogue, so that our media could respond to the concerns of our entire Church.

I was unable to attend in person because the Pastoral Commission meeting was taking place at the same time, which was very lively. A letter from the group of priests, who had published a manifesto, stated that they could not attend this meeting because the atmosphere was not conducive to dialogue.

That the Church felt like a teacher again, that they were dissatisfied with certain publications, that the previous meeting had ended very poorly, especially due to the Archbishop's misinterpretation. And that's why they suggested other points for discussion, not the one they'd been invited to continue their previous reflections on.

For my part I tried to be myselfI was calm and said that the Pastoral Commission was a consultation tool for the bishop, who indicated the topics according to the consultation he wanted to do, and since the consultation had already been prepared and indicated in the agency, it would be carried out as planned.

And those who did not want to come thus demonstrated their limited capacity for dialogue, and were invited to calmly express their opinions in dialogue with the Bishop or with the dialogue bodies of the Episcopate, and to compare them, correcting or strengthening their ways of thinking. Again TheDialogue will not consist of defending positions or expressing resentment, but rather of seeking the truth and sharing the love and unity of our Church.

In the afternoon, we met with the Curia staff: the Vicar General, Father Cortés; the Chancellor, Father Brito; the Vice-Chancellor, Father Rafael Urrutia; the Secretary, Sister Nicolasa; and the Administrator, Engineer Galván. We discussed primarily how to more effectively manage the Curia's agenda, since I, for example, keep it on cassette so I can have a copy. However, it only reflects the attitude and activity of the bishop himself, and I would like to see a diary of the entire Curia and the entire life of the Archdiocese; this is the history that will be of great interest, especially in these difficult times we are living in.

Father Rafael has committed himself to collecting the work of all the departments of the Curia.AlreadyUsing these personal notes of mine, create the diary we desire, and then study how to recover all the time that has passed, down to the details that could not be recorded in a diary.

That evening, I went to celebrate Mass in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Las Delicias neighborhood of Santa Tecla with Father Javier. Then we went to Carmen Chacón's house, where we always received a very warm welcome.

Wednesday, December 12, 1979.

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I went to celebrate Mass at the Parish of the Sweet Name of Mary in Chalatenango, run by the Maryknoll Fathers. The theme of my homily was "Mary, Teacher and Model of Evangelization"; how she helped us bring the great evangelizer, Jesus Christ; and how, secondly, she is the model of the person evangelized; and thirdly, how the evangelization of one person translates into evangelization, and how Mary is the great evangelizer of our America.

The Chief Justice and other lawyers had been announced for this evening, but at the last minute they said they couldn't come. This evening I went to celebrate Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe at the Colonia Guadalupe in Soyapango. Father Eliodoro Orellana is the chaplain of that chaplaincy, and the church was completely packed.

There were confirmations, and the message I left in the homily was the same as the Sweet Name of Mary message I had given this morning. Afterward, I went to dinner with Paco Calles, a resident of that parish. A group of young people who share his community

were also there. Also present were the parish priest of Soyapango, Father Villarán, and Father Eliodoro, from the aforementioned chaplaincy.

Thursday, December 13, 1979.

Feast of Saint Lucia. This patron saint of Suchitoto gathers a fervent crowd at the parish church of Santa Lucia, where Father Jorge Benavides is the parish priest, and he had invited me to preside over this celebration.

I took the opportunity to guide this abundant life of Suchitoto, a people highly promoted in politics and practical affairs, to tell them that the light of the eyes we asked of Saint Lucia was not only material sight, but above all the gaze of faith, and that faith demands of us today in the problems of Latin America and our homeland, particularly the three visions that the Pope indicated in Puebla as the theological foundation of our pastoral reflections: the truth about Christ, the truth about the Church, and the truth about humanity, which I have tried to apply to the circumstances of our country. After Mass, we shared our experience with several priests from that vicariate and had lunch at the convent of Father Benavides.

I have had an ongoing dialogue with Father Abrego, discussing very interesting topics, especially the problems of our presbytery. I will try to be more careful and cautious, as these constitute the core of our pastoral work and there is a risk of misunderstanding and even division.

I ask the Lord to free us from all these evils and to grant us a united, holy, and effective clergy for our situation. In the afternoon, I visited two Belgian nuns from the

Polyclinic Hospital who work in Quezaltepeque. They were in a car accident several days ago, which left them very ill, as they are in casts. I tried to encourage them; they have a great spirit and are willing to continue their work in that parish in Quezaltepeque.

That evening, I met with representatives of trade unions from the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States, as well as unions from our country. It was a very interesting interview.in whatThey expressed their admiration for the Church's role in defending the organization and rights of workers and peasants. They also offered their solidarity and, at the same time, their financial support, where possible, on behalf of the countries that have always supported our Latin American countries. I thanked them and tried to answer their questions as honestly as possible about the situation in the country and, above all, about the role of the Church in our homeland.

Friday, December 14, 1979.

This morning, the board of directors of Radio Ysax, the Voice of Pan America, met primarily to discuss the auditor and the change of director, given that Héctor Samour has a scholarship to study in Germany and will be leaving next January. Two candidates were presented, of which I prefer Napoleón Navarro, because he is better known and the position requires a highly trusted person.

Then we went to lunch at the Domus Mariae with the staff of the Curia, the printing press, and the radio station. It's a very large staff, about fifty people, and I felt the need to repeat these meetings to identify our criteria for serving the Church in such important roles.

I couldn't attend the meeting at the Ana Guerra de Jesús Promotion Center, so I delegated the meeting to the Dominican Fathers, who are closer. It's a center for the promotion of market women, where Refugio Álvarez is the main promoter of an initiative that is bearing great fruit.

That evening I went to the College of Fatima, home to the Superior General of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation. They had just celebrated their Provincial Chapter. They showed me the beautiful film of the beatification of their founder, Father Coll a wonderful ceremony which I attended personally, since the nuns of the College of Fatima offered me the trip.

It was said that serious things were happening in San Salvador and that they didn't want me to leave Santa Tecla, but I insisted and it was just a rumor because, in reality, the situation is always tense, but there was nothing extraordinary.

This afternoon we also had an important meeting with the Seminary Commission and several senators from the Presbytery to discuss the situation with the Episcopal Conference, following the December 5th meeting in which the change in leadership took place, with the return of Monsignor Aparicio as president, the appointment of Father Juan León Montoya, who is not in communion with the Archbishop, as secretary of the Social Commission, and the elimination of five seminary professors, which the Archdiocese approved.

The discussion focused on the idea that perhaps the time had come to establish our own seminary and not be victims of so many injustices perpetrated by the Episcopal Conference. It was also agreed to prepare a thorough report to be presented in Rome on how the Episcopal Conference in our country is failing to provide the services for which

it was created, and on how there is an almost personal bias against the Archbishop and the Archdiocese.

Father Fabián has been assigned to prepare this report, and Father Rafael Urrutia has also been asked to speak by telephone this evening with Monsignor Rivera, who is in Holland or Belgium, to bring this information to Rome.

Saturday, December 15, 1979.

There were activities in the Curia, so I couldn't. I would like toI dedicate it to the reflection of the homily. I also attended a family gathering with my brother Mamerto in Apopa, and in the afternoon I went to Santa Lucía, the parish where many children are preparing for First Communion and many young people for Confirmation. The ceremony was very moving, with great participation from everyone, and it was clear that the sacraments were truly part of the process. Continue readingChristian community. I congratulated that community and urged them to unite and never disunite, despite all the temptations that currently polarize our country.

Sunday, December 16, 1979.

The eight o'clock Mass in the Cathedral gave me the opportunity to focus on the most important news of the week: agrarian transformation, which represents a real need from a pastoral perspective. I feel like this comment had a positive impact on the audience and further defined...

After Mass in the Cathedral, I went to the Eucharistic College, where the catechists of the Parish of Divine Providence, in the Atlacatl neighborhood, held a meeting during which I participated in a roundtable discussion in which very interesting questions were posed about the pastoral ministry of our Archdiocese.

Most of the participants were young, and I perceived them as quite mature. I congratulated the parish priest, a Redemptorist, and the nuns of the Eucharistic College, who are truly influencing the effective pastoral care of catechesis in that parish. I invited them to collaborate at the archdiocesan level with the Pastoral Commission to focus on this aspect, which is still lacking: catechesis.

.

Then I went to celebrate a mass at the seminary of San José de la Montaña, where a group of priests who hadAfter leaving his ministry, had gathered for spiritual reflection. Many were with their wives, and this gave me the opportunity to respond to many of them and to celebrate the Eucharist in a very cordial manner. Afterward, we had lunch together on the Seminary terrace, with very cordial comments and the enthusiasm of making this group a grassroots community that, given its theological and pastoral preparation, can be of great help to our Archdiocese.

That evening, at seven o'clock, we celebrated a beautiful confirmation ceremony for the young people at the Montserrat parish. I warmly welcomed these welcoming people and then spent time in the intimacy of the convent with Father Molina, Father Sanggiano, parish priest of El Calvario, and several young people and adults from the Montserrat parish community.

Monday, December 17, 1979.

This morning I spent time with the four seminarians preparing to receive their ministry next Sunday. We analyzed their reports, presented by the seminary team, which contained several negative points. But what do I think? That the situation isn't all that serious, but rather a lack of understanding for the concerns of our Archdiocese and our young people. I've had consultations and conversations with several journalists. For health reasons, I've seen two doctors, but it's not serious. On the contrary, they've encouraged me, because, thank God, I'm in excellent health these days.

We spent the afternoon recording Wednesday's show, as we'll be very busy tomorrow. Agitated, the meeting of the priests and I have another visit to a canton of Ciudad Delgado.

In the evening, the Christmas ultreya of the Christian Cursillos was held at the "San Pablo" house, Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

Tuesday, December 18, 1979.

This morning we held our monthly clergy meeting, postponed in preparation for Christmas, with the intention of making it a moment of Christmas fellowship. However, a topic for further study was proposed. The meeting took place in San José de la Montaña, and the young priest Jorge Benavides spoke about the unity of our clergy. He evaluated and encouraged an appreciation of the many positive aspects of the Archdiocese, as well as the negative ones. It was a true examination of conscience, which was then conducted

in reflection groups by vicariate and concluded with a plenary session with very valuable and optimistic contributions.

I concluded this series of reflections by saying that Christmas presented us with the point where we should all converge, despite our personal differences: that Christ is the great mystery of transcendence and immanence. It is in these two tendencies that we may differ, but Christ's balance offers us the guideline for living as priests, always seeking to be the representation of Christ in the world.

Christ is the Word made flesh, a mystery of immanence; God becomes man and enters human realities, illuminating all, but always remaining God. And the priest must carry the identity of his Church, its mission, to illuminate all the realities of the earth: political, social, economic, but without ever losing his own identity.

The other tendency is transcendence, that is, that if Christ became man it was to elevate all things to God, and that this is our role: to transcend things from their deepest core; not to remain immanent, but to transcend, as Christ could say at the end of his life: "I came from the Father to the world, and from the world I return to the Father." Afterward, we were served lunch, which we shared fraternally with the nuns and priests.

That same afternoon, I went to the San Laureano canton, in the parish of Ciudad Delgado, to celebrate the patronal feast of Our Lady of Remedies. It was a gathering where weddings and confirmations had been organized. The people were extremely warm, and the joy was profound, making us forget everything about the past.

I had dinner with the Archbishop of Maracaibo, Venezuela, Monsignor Domingo Roa, a former colleague from the Instituto Pío Latino, who came specifically to meet me

and offer his assistance, also on behalf of the President of Venezuela, to address the difficult situation in El Salvador. I decided from the beginning that I would act as a pastor, as I have always tried to do, since, on the political front, the President of Venezuela had the opportunity to discuss our country's political problems in depth with Engineer Duarte, who has lived in Venezuela for a long time.

But from a pastoral perspective, I would only ask for international influence to mitigate left- and right-wing extremism and, perhaps, send political aid to the various parties in our country, but this falls within the realm of politics. My desire as a pastor is to seek unity, to mitigate so much violence, and if something could be done in this direction, it would, pastorally, be a true collaboration with the Church, which greatly supports it. We will appreciate it.

Wednesday, December 19, 1979.

Today, the parish of San José Quezaltepeque is celebrating its patronal feast. Invited by Father Roberto and the community, I went to celebrate Mass there, and there were a good number of young confirmation recipients and children making their First Communion. Attendance at the Dominican Sisters' school was very high, as it cannot be held in the parish church, which is still occupied by Father Quinteros. While I was having lunch in the dining room of the Dominican Sisters of Quezaltepeque, I received a phone call informing me that the Archbishop's Palace had just been occupied by the grassroots political organization, Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero.

I then contacted the person responsible for the occupation to ask him what his objectives were and to complain about the illegal occupation of these archiepiscopal

offices. They said they were interested in speaking with me personally; however, I was able to clarify their objectives, which were to help them find the bodies of those killed in the recent evictions carried out by security forces and to return the prisoners captured during those evictions. Third, I asked them to denounce the demagogic way in which the Government Council has handled the population's problems.

In the afternoon, a group of priests from the Presbyteral Senate, convened by the Vicar, Father Cortés, came to discuss the situation of the occupation. At that moment, Father Rogelio Poncel, a Belgian who seems deeply involved in this occupation, also came to ask me if the occupation was asking him to come and discuss it. I got a little angry when I told him, "Don't represent the interests of an organization so directly, since he is the pastor of all Christians."

There was a small altercation with him and other priests, but I finally reconciled with him, telling him that I trusted his priestly and pastoral sense to understand the delicate situation we are experiencing and not take sides. I went with a representative of the priests and the director of Legal Aid, Bachelor Cuéllar, to speak with the occupants of the Archbishopric, who reiterated the objectives I mentioned earlier.

We discussed various issues at length, and I even sensed a certain distrust towards them regarding the Church's work, as if it had "turned 180 degrees," as they said, regarding its attitude toward God, as if it had betrayed the interests of the people. This greatly annoyed me, given the sincerity with which I always try to defend the interests of our people, starting from the Gospel. And I told them that, for today, this general discussion wasn't so important, but rather that we should return to the specific issue of the occupation.

We also spoke with a group of hostages-fifteen, including four priests, secretaries, and other employees-who had decided that it was unnecessary to pressure the Archbishop to file a complaint and seek justice, since this has always been the role of the Church. They also felt like prisoners, and that, therefore, this was not a peaceful occupation, though certainly unarmed, but a violation of their freedom. Other considerations struck me as very courageous and just, including allowing the women to leave the occupation.

I also said I would have stayed if what they were looking for was safety, that the Archbishop's presence would be sufficient, and that they would let all the other hostages go. But they said the hostages said they understood their generosity, but that they preferred that I be absent so that they could act better in every other respect and that they were happy to remain in solidarity with the Archbishop internally.

However, after a more thorough analysis, I found some small ambiguities in some of those who seemed to sympathize with the occupiers' cause. I therefore had a telephone conversation with Colonel Majano of the Government Council, who was the first to call, but I took the opportunity to ask for his support in this situation and that the Legal Aid Office would be in touch soon with more specific details.

That evening I also had an appointment to speak with Engineer Mayorga Quirós, who confidentially expressed to me his fears of collaborating with a government that still maintains a strong repressive force.

However, I encouraged him because, despite this obvious repression, there is also a level of authority that seeks just solutions through more intelligent means, and he was at that level. It would be a shame to see civilians, in whom we have great confidence,

withdraw from this effort. This does not mean approving of the Junta, but rather hoping that ways other than violence and bloodshed will be found.

It was already late, almost eleven, when I headed to the Christianity Course dinner at Sigfrido Munés's house. We had a long conversation about the country's situation and the attitude Christians should have at this time. I was deeply comforted by the understanding and dedication of these lay people.

Thursday, December 20, 1979.

At breakfast, I spoke with Foreign Minister Héctor Dada, a staunch Christian, along with Father Pepe Simán, Father Estrada, and Father Fabián Amaya. We analyzed the situation, which appears extremely difficult. However, we have faith in God, and I encouraged the civilian government to also influence the military to join the efforts for true social justice that inspire the principles of the Government Junta.

We then also discussed ecclesiastical matters, paying particular attention to the trip of a special envoy to the Holy See. In principle, it was agreed to appoint Father Pepe Simán as ambassador, as he is an expert on hierarchical and priestly matters in our Church.

I hope this mediation will do great good for our Church. The Chancellor stated that, in the current situation, the Nunciature has expressed the opinion that there is no hope for such changes in our Church.

On behalf of the Archbishopric and at the request of the Popular Leagues of February 28, which are occupying the Archbishopric, Father Cortés and Bachelor Beto Cuéllar, on behalf of Legal Aid, went to speak with the military at the Presidential Palace. They felt there was good will, and this afternoon they agreed to resolve the issue requested by the Leagues: the situation of prisoners and murderers during the occupations, who were violently evicted by the security corps.

Archbishop López reported that the cathedral had been occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block and that a wake would be held there for a body killed in a clash, who would be buried in the cathedral.

I spoke this afternoon with Mr. Ernesto Rivas Gallont, who, in his capacity as Consul of South Africa, came to clarify some aspects of the kidnapping of that Ambassador, of whom we have no news.

Friday, December 21, 1979.

Since the Archbishop's Curia was occupied, Father Fabián Amaya, Father Cortés, Father Brito, and Doris Osegueda, Secretary of Social Communications, met at the Divine Providence Hospital to study a bulletin describing the occupation of the Archbishopric. The analysis of the occupation was very interesting, and from there, the thinking of all these somewhat fanatical organizations involving Christians and even priests was revealed. It seems that the influence of Father Rogelio, parish priest of Zacamil, was decisive in this seizure of power.

I don't want to judge with certainty, but it makes me suspicious, as do other members of the community in that same parish. It was also agreed to celebrate Mass in the Basilica, given that the Cathedral is occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block. Although they claim the doors are open, this would expose them to the possibility of manipulating the Mass. It was also decided to suspend the youth meeting scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, but the priestly ordination of the four third-year theology students will still take place.

Dr. Badía, Minister of Health, was kind enough to personally deliver the information requested by Legal Aid regarding the injuries sustained in health centers during the eviction of the Popular Revolutionary League occupations. The doctor's visit was very informative, as he is one of the ministers most interested in the new government's transformation.

But he also sees the real difficulty of moving forward amid so much opposition from both extremes. María Julia Hernández, in charge of writing the homilies, brought three volumes covering the liturgical year.

I thanked her and congratulated her on this work of spreading my thoughts, which I believe is doing good. And today, looking at the three elegantly bound volumes, I realize the inspiration the Holy Spirit has given to His Word in our Archdiocese. Blessed be God. May the Lord bless this sowing of His Word and illuminate the realities we seek to illuminate week after week with His Divine Word.

Finally, at night, Monsignor Urioste arrived, returning from Holland, with Father Cortez we spoke about the situation in our country and the circumstances of his interesting trip.

Colonel Guerra and another colonel who was in exile and has returned also came to see me late at night; he seems rather pessimistic about the current situation. It's a shame, because this lack of courage could be fatal for men who must now face the situation with courage, precisely because it is difficult.

Monsignor Modesto López, parish priest of the Cathedral, was kind enough to go to represent the feast of the patron saint Thomas, since I, due to these circumstances, preferred not to move; furthermore, that I feel a little bit ill. I also begged him to represent us tomorrow, since I was supposed to go to the La Esperanza canton in San Pedro Perulapán, which he will do with kindness and generosity.

In mentioning the priests I met this morning, I forgot to mention Father Rafael Urrutia, rector of the Minor Seminary and chancellor of the Curia, who conducted himself with great dignity, courage, and fidelity to his bishop, a characteristic that also distinguished the other priest, Aníbal Romero, and the two seminarians who remained to guard the patrimony of the Archbishopric. I therefore express my special gratitude and congratulations for this spirit of priestly fidelity.

Saturday, December 22, 1979.

Due to the situation of the Archbishopric, which had been taken over by a popular political organization, I did not consider it appropriate to personally go to fulfill my commitment in the canton of La Esperanza in San Pedro Perulapán, but Monsignor Modesto López kindly went there and there, together with the parish priest, Father Solórzano, the vicar Father Montesinos, and Father Suchitoto, they well represented the

Church in a canton terrorized by the vengeful executions carried out there by armed revolutionary elements.

It was, therefore, a great consolation from the Church, even if, as I was told, there was much fear and none was as many people as one could wish for. Some had even spread the bad news that I was coming with the intention of bringing more violence to that poor canton. Poor people, how much they have suffered, first from the officials, from the Order and the National Guard, and now, in vengeance, from left-wing groups. May the Lord grant these poor hearts the peace they have lost. The Mass was, they said, celebrated very well, with the participation of all the priests present in the very appropriate Gospel commentary.

I also missed a confirmation ceremony at the Lourdes school, where I was also represented by the parish priest of El Calvario, Father Federico Sanggiano. For this reason, the youth vigil scheduled for this afternoon and evening has been canceled, as Father Rafael Urrutia, the main organizer, was unable to prepare immediately because he was being held hostage in the seized seminary.

Around noon, the Archbishopric of San Salvador was evacuated; we regret that the Popular League of February 28th caused so much disruption to the functioning of this service office and that Christian elements participated so actively in this occupation of their own Curia. It is incomprehensible, but in these times of confusion, we must try to understand.

Sunday, December 23, 1979.

The Mass, which was held in the Cathedral, despite advice to the contrary, since the Cathedral had been occupied by the Block the previous week and there were fears that there might be some disruption to the ceremony, was finally held in the Cathedral with great success. During this Mass, four third-year seminarians in theology were entrusted with their ministries. These are four imminent hopes for the presbyterate of El Salvador; perhaps next year we will ordain these four young men who are now beginning. ministry

After Mass, the people warmly welcomed them at the doors of the cathedral and, on behalf of the Seminary, we organized a small celebration for them at the Hospital of Divine Providence.

In the afternoon I went to El Calvario de Cojutepeque.

This afternoon, accompanied by Monsignor López, I went to Cojutepeque to bless the new Church of Calvary, financed by the late Miss Mercedes Barriere. A beautiful church, which will serve as a reliquary for an ancient and venerated image of Cojutepeque, the Lord of Mercies.

I took the opportunity to preach in the homily the Christian meaning of redemption, without which the other redemptions of the earth have no meaning. Very welcoming people made me feel the joy of a community that truly lives the Christian faith in its simplicity. The parish priest, Father Cayo Ayala, the Belgian nuns who work there, the Franciscan nuns, who also run a school there, and a large group of faithful formed the core of this beautiful ceremony.from the blessing of the new temple.

That evening I received an invitation from the Atlacatl colony to attend a posada, but I felt very tired and begged the priest to excuse me.

CHAPTER 23.

Year 1979.

Diary from December 24, 1979 to January 15.

1979/1980.

Monday, December 24, 1979.

Christmas Eve. We had breakfast with the Vicars General and the two Chancellors, including Father Amaya, to briefly review the Archbishop's current problems, primarily regarding the occupation of the Curia, the pastoral attitude of some priests, the Seminary, and other issues. These were very well received and addressed in a very pastoral and cordial spirit, with the Archbishop's solicitude. The entire morning passed, and we were just about to leave the table when lunchtime arrived again, but they had gone off to prepare the Christmas celebrations for their various ecclesiastical offices.

In the afternoon, in Colonia Roma, at the church of the Carmelite Fathers, I presided over the First Communion ceremony. A large group was present to celebrate the arrival of the Baby Jesus.

At eight o'clock in the evening I celebrated Christmas mass in the Cathedral, despite my fear and the advice I had been given that it was better to close the Church, it

was a very beautiful mass, Enough People and so we shared the celebration and greeting of our Christmas.

The message consisted of three sentences from today's Gospel: the first, which refers to the great news: "God is the great news." His presence in the world has planted a seed of newness in history. There is always hope when there are changes in history, because God walks with us. The second sentence, "the sign the angels gave to the shepherds: they will find the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger," Christ is God who embraces human misery and takes on every pain and suffering to give it redemptive value. And the third, "Glory to God in the highest." This is the goal of every human being's life: to do everything for the greater glory of God.

At ten o'clock that evening, I celebrated Mass at the Divine Providence Hospital, where there was a large crowd, despite the fear that this Christmas would be a dark one, without electricity or water. However, thank God, it passed peacefully.

Tuesday, December 25, 1979.

.

I presided over the First Communion and Confirmation ceremonies in the parish of Huizúcar, where Father Benito Tovar and the Passionist nuns prepared these children and young people very well.

This afternoon, I prepared the recording for tomorrow's interview. Octavio was from Sonsonate, which indicates a great willingness to collaborate in this apostolate.

And in the evening I went to dinner with Angélica de Mena's family, the Argueta family, where we also reminisced about the wonderful times we had spent in San Miguel. It was our Christmas dinner, as we couldn't have it the day before due to pastoral commitments.

Wednesday, December 26, 1979.

At the Hospital of Divine Providence, I have received several important visitors, the most significant of which was the Provincial of the Augustinian Fathers, who has a very positive impression of our Archdiocese and the work of the priests. He will establish a sort of professional institute, where young people who wish to follow his spiritual path will gather.Agostino.

This morning, Father Cortez went to Quezaltepeque to fulfill his promise: that today Father Quinteros, who had been an intruder for a long time, would leave the convent and the Church. But the mission failed because a group of twenty-five people incarnated inside from convent to the rebellious priest, under the pretext that they would not send back a citizen, to hand him over to a foreigner.

Father Roberto, the legitimate parish priest, is Belgian, and perhaps this represents an obstacle to achieving this peace. We'll see if a change of parish priest is appropriate, but we will insist that Father Quinteros do what he deserves.

Thursday, December 27, 1979.

Today the Priestly Cooperative celebrated its Christmas celebration at the Seminary of San José de la Montaña, but I was unable to attend because today, the feast of St. John the Apostle, I was invited to San Juan Los Planes, atop the San Salvador volcano in the jurisdiction of Quezaltepeque. There, many Christians are celebrating the patronal feast, organized into communities by university students who have been working there for several days or years under the direction of Monsignor Urioste.

It's an example of a basic community promoted by lay apostles. It was a beautiful first communion, a wedding, and, above all, a basic ecclesial community. There was...Father Roberto, who is the parish priest of Quezaltepeque and who knows that work very well.

Upon my return, I learned over the radio of a crisis within the government. There has been a clash between ministers and the Armed Forces, and it seems they are preparing a statement that is, in effect, a threat to resign, because they believe the Army has veered to the right and is furthering the oligarchy's ambitions. The ministers, who took office inspired by the October 15 proclamation, want the profound structural transformations our people need. We are waiting for this crisis to emerge within the government.

In the evening, I met with the Seminary Commission, during which we analyzed the situation regarding the attitude of the Episcopal Conference and the Seminary team. There is a group of priests who are deeply concerned, and I believe a good solution will be found by more directly entrusting our pastoral formation to our seminarians from the Archdiocese, even if they will attend the Interdiocesan Seminary for their academic formation, just as other groups of religious students do.

The evening visit by a member of the Udn party couldn't take place because I was busy with another meeting. And when I told them I could come later that evening, they replied that they had other things to do in this difficult time for political parties.

Friday, December 28, 1979.

The Day of the Holy Innocents, which has its special place in the Parish of Antiguo Cuscatlán, was not possible. I was unable to attend because I have many commitments, as many members of the government and the military come to consult me. It is a sign of the Church's prestige, and I try to serve it with all sincerity, without departing from my pastoral role.

Due to the country's political situation, during which I must be present to participate in various consultations, I was unable to attend the seminarians' meeting in San José de la Montaña-seminarians from the Archdiocese, but presided over by Bishop Urioste-nor the meeting of catechumens preparing for the scrutiny at the "María Eugenia" house in Planes de Renderos. Nor was I able to attend the Christian Renewal in the Spirit meeting held at the Rinaldi Institute in Planes de Renderos under the direction of Bishop Talavera, who traveled from Mexico. Nor was I able to attend a pastoral meeting we were supposed to hold at the parish of San Sebastián, Ciudad Delgado.

But everyone understood that my role is now in service of these interests and that I could not move from my seat.

Saturday, December 29, 1979.

For the same reasons, I had to skip the visit to Candelaria, Cuscatlán, where Father Interiano had prepared a good group of young people for Confirmation, but Monsignor Modesto López came to represent me.

I couldn't even go to San Antonio Los Ranchos, where the traditional corn fair is held. There, FatherFabián, Episcopal Vicar of Chalatenango, was there with other priests and brought me fond memories of that community and a gift: a hat made of corn cobs, woven like rushes, with corn silk trim. And a beautiful letter from Potonico, an expression of true solidarity from those good people.

During lunch, I asked Monsignor Urioste, Father Fabián, and Doris Osegueda for advice on the historical theme of tomorrow's homily.

Sunday, December 30, 1979.

It was a Sunday of intense pastoral work. I celebrated Sunday Mass in the Cathedral, where about four hundred young people, who had celebrated the vigil at the San José de la Montaña Seminary, participated to crown this night of prayer. One of them shared a beautiful testimony at the end of the Mass.

The Mass came at the perfect time: the feast of the Holy Family, and I focused in particular on the young Jesus in his family to also convey a message to these young people, who have made such a beautiful gesture of prayer and reflection. They are young

people from different communities and share how they are rebuilding their lives.community in our parishes.

Afterward, I went to celebrate a Confirmation and First Communion ceremony in Tonacatepeque. Father Luis Cázares was waiting for me with his traditional groups of Daughters of Mary, Nazarenes, the Blessed Sacrament Guard, and a large representation of the town on the shore of Tonacatepeque. We made our way to the church amid joy, singing, applause, and confetti, where we had a beautiful celebration.

I also spoke of the Holy Family, but in the sense of the spirit of God that will be given in Confirmation and which gives a sacred meaning to all our Christian families.

At the time of the offering, Padre Pio had prepared a very generous procession of gifts and offerings that truly overwhelmed me, filling the altar with these gestures of affection from the people. We had lunch with Padre Pio's family and other friends, and I got the impression that Tonacatepeque lives an intense parish life.

From there, I returned to the National Gymnasium at 2:30 p.m., where the Renewal in the Spirit Movement had held a large gathering. I believe about 8,000 Christians from various parishes and about 12 priests will preside over the consecration, giving this special Mass a truly rich atmosphere of fervor and participation.

Finally, Archbishop Talavera invited me to lay my hands on the people to reaffirm the commitments of baptism, confirmation, and the presence of the Spirit in that great crowd, to whom I said: "Go as messengers of the Spirit, of peace, of truth, of justice, throughout this country that needs it so much."

And finally, in the evening, I celebrated the Mass that the Marriage Encounters Movement was preparing at the Church of Carmen, and also had a short meeting with the Secretariat to review and plan new pastoral work related to Family Ministry.

Monday, December 31, 1979.

I had breakfast with Dr. Chávez, secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, and I didn't have much time to speak with him because the young officers who make up the Permanent Council of the Armed Forces were already waiting for me outside. We spoke at length with them about the situation and their intention to always abide by their proclamation, which established the new government. In all honesty, I warned them of the risks and the aspects I believed needed to be corrected to overcome the crisis of confrontation with the civilian ministers.

Then I went to the airport with Monsignor Urioste to meet Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider, who had announced his visit to me. At the airport it wasMr. Nuncio and Monsignor Revelo. I asked Mr. Nuncio if it it would beI went to his Nunciature; he told me he knew nothing. For my part, I had prepared Dr. Chavez's house, where he would be welcome with nice to meet you, if you wanted.

The Cardinal told me he would have preferred to stay at the Seminary, but when we arrived at the Hospital of Divine Providence and I told him I had my modest residence there, which I would gladly offer him, he preferred the latter option because, he said, "it shows that I am with you." The Cardinal's gesture of supporting me in my work also greatly encouraged me.

From here, just this afternoon, he began a series of visits and interviews to learn about the country's reality and the situation of our Church. He understood the intensity of the political moment, in this conflict between civilians and the military, and he gave me many insights, since his experiences in Brazil are similar.

And so I had the opportunity to guide many people today and this afternoon. This afternoon, the Cardinal visited Monsignor Revelo, the Nuncio, and also received some lay people. In fact, for lunch, I was joined by Engineer Román Mayorga, a member of the Revolutionary Government Council. That evening, I celebrated Mass in the Cathedral at seven and nine o'clock at the Hospital of Divine Providence. The year ended with a family dinner with the nuns and some friends who came to the Mass, which was very solemn.

At midnight, the passing of the old year and the beginning of the new are always greeted with intense fireworks that give the impression of a true liturgy of time, as Father Segura would say, may he rest in peace.

Among the important visits of this day was that of Dr. Badía, Minister of Health, who proposed that I convene the parties in conflict with the Government to invite them to dialogue.in front of the Church. After analyzing this proposal, I felt this service was necessary, and I asked the doctor himself to convene the civil side and invite the Governing Council for the military side. I did so, along with Colonel Gutiérrez, who also suggested that it would be appropriate to bring the High Command.

I told him that, on my part, there was no problem, as long as we were sincerely willing to talk to the civilians. The Organized Council Fornext January 2nd.

YEAR 1980.

MCMLXXX.

SAINT OSCAR.

CHAPTER 24.

Year 1980.

Diary from December 24, 1979 to January 15.

1980.

Tuesday, January 1, 1980.

New Year's Eve. The country wakes up tense amid divisions within the government. A ministerial crisis is becoming increasingly evident.

It seems that civilians are convinced that this is a right-wing military government and that they cannot continue in this direction. I try to understand and guide them, and I tell them that, above all, they should focus on the people, whom they must serve.

Like every first of the month, we celebrated the Holy Hour at 5:00 PM at the Hospital of Divine Providence, with an extraordinary turnout. I spoke of the fullness of

time, spoken of by St. Paul, and how God is fulfilling his great story of salvation in natural history; how Christ has entered into history and gives supernatural meaning to all our years.

Wednesday, January 2, 1980.

I woke up very worried because today I am called to lead this epochal meeting, but I count on the prayers of the sick, the nuns, and all those who understand the important moment our country is experiencing.

At the meeting, I was advised by Monsignor Urioste and Father Estrada. The civilian ministers and other civilian members of the government arrived promptly at 9:30. The military officials apparently made a mistake and went to the hospital; however, they arrived a little late, but refused to enter before speaking with me, as if they hadn't realized they would be speaking to civilians and were reluctant.

I told them that dialogue prevailed.For the good of the people, and that it was necessary to talk, and that I had clearly stated to them that this was a meeting with civilians. After a brief conversation with the military, Colonel Gutiérrez expressed his willingness to dialogue and demonstrated this by attending the meeting. I thanked him and accompanied them to join the civilians, who were on the upper floor of the Seminary library, where the meeting was held.

I apologized for the delay, as it was almost 11:00 a.m., and expressed my role as pastor, representative of the Church, and, as a Salvadoran, representative of a large segment of the people. I asked them, on behalf of the Church and the people, to engage in

frank and sincere dialogue and to seek a solution that would serve the country, without instilling a new sense of frustration in these already suffering people. They treated me with great respect.

I thanked them and invited them to open a dialogue, explaining the root of the problem-the conflict-then seeking the many commonalities between the conflicting sectors, and finally highlighting the differences in an effort to overcome them. Dr. Zamora, Minister of the Interior, began by explaining the root of the problem: the military's ambiguity, the rightward shift, as they call it, which makes them uncomfortable continuing to work. Rather than be complicit with a military government that continues to protect the right, they prefer to withdraw.

The dialogue between the military and civilians began with great frankness, even though the civilians seemed unwilling to believe the military's promises or unclear about the proclamation the government had promised to uphold. In the end, I summed up this meeting by saying that I saw an ideal, namely, the revolutionary process they are trying to promote.

I also noted some difficulties and emphasized everything I had heard in this discussion, such as the ambiguities of the army and other negative aspects impacting the process of advancing our people. And third, I told them that I had also heard about paths to a solution, the most important of which were honesty, communication, and everything that fosters rapprochement. And among these paths, I offered the service of the Church, which was being carried out at the time and which I was willing to continue.

A cordial atmosphere seemed to have developed, and the final farewell was very different from the one we had just entered. But unfortunately, as we were leaving, the

Permanent Council of the Armed Forces' response was already being broadcast on the radio. They were affirming their military position: yes, they defended the proclamation, but rejected several points raised by the ministers as unconstitutional. This was a deliberate decision, because at three in the afternoon, when the meeting to gather the military response was supposed to be held, they had already heard it on the radio, and hadn't even sent the response; they had had to send for it.

All these factors have further aggravated the situation and have already led to the first ministerial resignations, which will undoubtedly be followed by others. On the other hand, I was unable to attend...

At noon, I had received an invitation from the Nuncio to a luncheon in honor of Cardinal Lorscheider, but since the meeting would last until almost two in the afternoon, I asked him to excuse me for this situation, which he clearly understood. The Cardinal had already warned me that I might not be able to attend and that my meeting with the government was far more important to him, and that I shouldn't worry if I couldn't attend; he confirmed these convictions of mine when we met after the meeting and lunch.

The Cardinal was already leaving for the airport, and I accompanied him; we had a very cordial chat. He is impressed by my work and by the people he spoke with, and believes it is a matter of personally suggesting to the Pope a strengthening of the Episcopate and a more radical solution to the situation of our Church. He believes that my work, after reading the pastoral letters, homilies, and speaking with impartial people interested in the life of the Church, is a project worthy of support, which has once again confirmed me in the work we are carrying out in our Pastoral Ministry.

Thursday, January 3, 1980.

Breakfast with Sigfriedo Munés and Dr. Chávez, with whom we discussed current challenges.

Dr. Chavez is an advisor to the Christian Democrats and the government, and he told me that he was already in the negotiation phase for several days now, the Christian Democratic Party has been participating and now, in this government crisis, it will negotiate its political work, trying to save the situation.

After breakfast, he went to the Presidential Palace, where meetings were held throughout the day.

I received a visit from some members of the Government and I was deeply satisfied with the trust they place in the Church and the good that can be done. Guiding them from a pastoral perspective.

Friday, January 4, 1980.

This morning I met with five priests from the Archdiocese, with whom I encountered some difficulties in intimate communion due to political aspects of their pastoral ministry. But through in-depth dialogue and a sincere search for a solution to these difficulties and mistrust, I discovered much human, Christian, and priestly value, which we will continue to cultivate in future meetings.

I remember that Father Rogelio, Father Benito Tovar, Father Trinidad Nieto, Father Rutilio Sánchez, and Father Pedro Cortez were present; also present were Father Juan Macho and Father Walter Guerra, who were of great help to me with their priestly and focused guidance.

This afternoon, I received a visit from the Ecumenical Catholics of Sweden, who announced a Peace Prize for our Archdiocese this year, on behalf of the Free Church Christians, as the Christian communities in Sweden are called, since only Lutheranism is official. They said they will announce the prize in May, which means this news was brought to me, and for which I also thanked them on behalf of the Archdiocese.

I also received a visit from Dr. Guillermo Ungo, who recently resigned as a member of the Revolutionary Government Council, along with other politicians, to analyze the situation and ensure there is still hope for a way out of this difficult situation. I was called by the other Council member who resigned, Engineer Román Mayorga, who currently heads the Revolutionary Government Council.a vacation in Mexico.

Saturday, January 5, 1980.

At noon, the two members of the Board of Directors, military officers, Colonels Gutiérrez and Majano, arrived.

I met with Monsignor Urioste and it was a frank conversation about the problems, as they see them, and their hopes for a solution.I had the opportunity forTo reiterate my thoughts, always trying to serve people, so as not to create new reasons for failure. They

believe the mass resignations were a very positive experience, a crisis, but not exactly a failure.

There is optimism among them, in the negotiations with the Christian Democrats and also in those that will be facilitated with popular groups, to always seek a government that is of the people and for the people. They had lunch with the priests who were with me, helping me reflect on the situation for tomorrow's homily.

In the afternoon, the rector of the seminary and Father Rafael Urrutia, head of the minor seminary and the seminary commission, visited. I also asked Father Urrutia to be my personal secretary, so that we could be closer, since he is a young, intelligent, and active priest. Therefore, he would at least try to call me and come to the hospital for lunch every now and then.

We discussed several points regarding the seminary, since Father Jesús Delgado also arrived at that time and gave us wonderful suggestions, including that of creating a preparatory year for this year, so that those entering the first year of philosophy could begin in this way and receive, rather, an introduction to the priestly and vocational spirit. This would all constitute a kind of novitiate, which is not very necessary for understanding what those who sometimes come from schools where they have never heard of the seminary or vocations have gotten themselves into.

We will work to achieve this goal at Domus Mariae; we will seek the collaboration of Father Juan Macho Merino, who has a group of Passionist students in the nearby parish of San Francisco de Mejicanos. We have also attempted to offer a year of diaconal formation for theologians entering their fourth year, which will be very helpful in better preparing them for their future priesthood, in greater communion with the people. Finally,

we have other apostolic initiatives for seminaries and young people that proved very useful during this impromptu meeting.

Sunday, January 6, 1980.

It was a Sunday filled with work and pastoral satisfaction. I celebrated the Mass of the Epiphany in the Cathedral and, in my homily, compared the moment of the Savior to the tumult the Gospel speaks of in Jerusalem, when the Magi sought the King. I asked us, in the same spirit, to seek the salvation of our people, which, in fact, God has accomplished; for the Epiphany shows us that God came for the salvation of all peoples.

After Mass, a short press conference was held, as numerous representatives of the press, television, and radio were present. We discussed the points I had raised in the homily and other aspects of the current situation in the country. A Swiss journalist also asked me for a more confidential interview the following day at the hospital.

Then I went to the parish of Aculhuaca, where the catechists had prepared a wonderful group of young people and children for Confirmation. I also took advantage of the celebration of the Epiphany to talk about the life of God that Christ brought us and that continues to be shared through the sacraments. After lunch, I met with the small pastoral group. I noticed a great deal of division and disorientation, and this prompted a great deal of regret.significant responsibility for the parish priest's negligence in caring for the communities. I believe Father Crespín has acknowledged this and is able to provide a concrete response to this situation in his parish.

.

After lunch and a short break, I visited the Rosario de Mora community, where the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love work. They have created a vibrant community. There's a lot of interaction between young people and children, and it's truly evident that the pastoral spirit is lived there and the pastoral direction of our Archdiocese is pursued with true solidarity.

We had a First Communion with well-executed liturgical preparation, followed by a time with the pastoral staff, amid the joy of the children bursting their First Communion piñatas; in short, a family atmosphere, which is what Christ intended when he founded his Church, the family of God.

That evening, Father Moreno and I participated in a previously announced interview with a representative of the Popular Revolutionary Block. He shared his current thinking and analysis of the country's situation. I noted a significant shift in his openness to dialogue with other organizations, including this invitation they are extending to the Church, which we are taking advantage of to inspire the pastoral care we wish to offer all Christians who belong to these popular political organizations, so that their faith in this militancy may be safeguarded.

For me, this dialogue, which we agreed to continue, was very encouraging. Colonel Guerra was also expected. He was the only military officer to have signed his resignation from his ministerial positions with the civilians, and he, undoubtedly for this reason, suffered a certain punishment, as his car was machine-gunned and miraculously nothing happened to him. It's a shame that it was already late at night and he didn't come, even though I tried to contact him through Father Chus Delgado. I hope nothing tragic happens to this colonel at this time.

I also spoke on the phone with Héctor Dada, the former Foreign Minister who resigned with the government, but who, as a member of the Christian Democrats, was appointed to the Revolutionary Government Junta. He came to see me this morning, and I called to say hello. He told me he was just here to say hello and to talk a little about a tragedy in Chalatenango, where he was informed that around seventy people had died.

I told him that I didn't know any more than what he had reported at Mass, around four o'clock; but that this news was interesting and that we would find out,and to take these situations into account, since they are the ones that undermine the good will of the Government. I wished him success and that we would pray a lot for the country to find a solution in the option just put forward, that is, to call on the Christian Democrats to help the Government resolve this crisis.

Monday, January 7, 1980.

I was briefly at the Archbishopric and saw a lot of life in the various offices. In the Pastoral Commission there was theStudy of the Basic Ecclesial Communities; the legal issues of the Diocese were also discussed in the General Vicariate. Several people, priests, nuns, and faithful, visited the offices for various reasons. I spoke with Father Alas, who works in Concepción Quezaltepeque. He is a very exemplary priest, with whom we share several pastoral criteria, which I find extremely focused and priestly.

Thank God, we have priests with profound spiritual and priestly formation. I also learned about the preparations for tomorrow's clergy meeting, which will be a spiritual retreat to celebrate the solemn presentation of licenses.

I spent the rest of the day at the farm of the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love, taking a short break. But upon my return, I had a very important meeting that evening, in this time of crisis for the government and the country. Many consultations and visits are arriving, and, thank God, they are being welcomed with the light the Holy Spirit is bestowing upon me. For this I am so grateful, praying that His Church may always be worthy of being present at every moment of our history.

Tuesday, January 8, 1980.

The meeting with the clergy was extremely rich in spirituality and theological reflection on the reality of the Church and, in particular, on the meaning of communion and mission, attributing profound theological significance to the granting of ministerial licenses to priests and to the letters that, for the first time, are being issued as documents of authorization to religious communities.

It was my turn to present the basic meditation and offer some reflections, which were then gathered in a brief plenary session before moving on to the Eucharist in the Seminary chapel, where the solemn Eucharistic concelebration took place. At the end of the celebration, these documents, authorizing the true mission of the priest in the parishes and countries where he is to work, were delivered as a mission to the entire Archdiocese.

In the afternoon I went to Santa Tecla; I visited the Salesian nuns at the Santa Inés school and wanted to offer my condolences to Doña Concepción de Viguer, but I couldn't find her.

There were some phone calls home. I heard Dr. Morales Erlich on television, expounding the views of the Christian Democratic Party, which has pledged, albeit with conditions, to help the Armed Forces lead the government out of this crisis.

I think it was a very clear and solid presentation. A call to people to support a democratic solution, which is the most rational option at this time, since the other options would be either the far right, which would lead to tremendous repression, or the far left, which would be a revolution that would cost a lot of blood. There were also other phone calls throughout the day. It arrived and tried to connect at night.

Wednesday, January 9, 1980.

Today's first interview was with a group of Carmelite nuns from San José, who are leaving the congregation to undertake a pastoral experience. They will live in a community with religious commitment, but will no longer belong to their congregation. They will be hosted in the parish of Guazapa. They were urged to takeI'm taking this issue very seriously and creating an experience that will be of great benefit to our diocese. One of these Sundays, I'll celebrate Mass and present this experience to that community.

Another very important meeting was with Monsignor Rivera, Father Vega, and David, head of the Social Secretariat. The meeting aimed to clarify the situation, given that Monsignor Aparicio, recently appointed president of the Social Commission, appointed Father Juan León Montoya as secretary. This priest is not in tune with our pastoral work and could cause significant disruption to our work. Therefore, we are

working to restore the Social Secretariat to its archdiocesan origins, separate from the Social Commission of the Episcopal Conference.

I received a visit from Dr. Chávez, who spent the entire night at the Presidential Palace discussing the agreement between the Christian Democrats and the Armed Forces. Recently, he expressed satisfaction with having obtained the Army's approval and acceptance of all the points proposed by the Christian Democrats, although he emphasized some minor points that always pose a risk if not implemented promptly; such as, for example, the resignation of the Minister of Defense, which, citing my homily last Sunday, has led the Junta to consider it highly appropriate to remove the repressive figure that this military command can represent.

But Dr. Chávez warned that there must be a secret compromise, given that everyone supports the Minister, whom the people already generally reject. Overall, however, Dr. Chávez is very optimistic that this restructuring of the Government Council, with Christian Democrat and progressive liberal elements, can provide a good solution to our country's serious crisis.

Father Mauro Yánez, an old classmate from Rome, visited me, and although the visit was very short, it was very cordial and full of memories.

I went to the vicariate of the Mejicanos, but I didn't find the priests gathered there. I spoke only with Father Juan Macho, recently elected vicar of that vicariate, which I'm very pleased about, as he is a priest who is very attentive to pastoral care and spirituality. We discussed various vicariate issues, but he believes that by working as a vicarial team, all these problems will be resolved with the Lord's help.

I gave him my portrait for his community, another for the Domus Mariae and another for the Belgian nun who takes care of that pastoral meeting house and which will probably serve as the headquarters for our year of preparation for the Major Seminary.

The full lineup of the Board of Directors was broadcast on the radio at noon, with two well-known military officers, Colonels Majano and Gutiérrez, and three civilians, two Christian Democrats, Dr. Morales Erlich and Engineer Héctor Dada, and one independent progressive member, a doctor named Arévalo, I believe.

But among popular politicians, confidence in the solution proposed by the Christian Democrats and the army has not yet taken root, and instead there is talk of a popular uprising, encouraged by left-wing groups.

They received a heavy publicity blow today, as the former Minister of Culture, Mr. Samayoa, publicly declared himself to be removed from hiding.within the Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Movement. The news has caused a stir and is being discussed in various ways.

In my radio interview, I said that the first thing I had to do was respect his choice, which he had certainly made with great conscience, and learn from it, which exposes the narrow-mindedness of the far right, which does not accept peaceful solutions but rather the violent means promoted by these left-wing groups.

And the fault lies also with the Army, which has become accustomed to repressing the aspirations of a people and believes there is no other way to defend itself than with the same weapon: violence! "I hope," I said in my commentary, "that this case of Mr. Samayoa will make people think that there is little room for peaceful and rational

solutions, and that we must urge everyone who can do something, so that this peaceful and rational solution will bring about change and eliminate the need for the bloodbath that is about to come."

Mr. Ernesto Rivas Gallont brought me the response from the South African government and the family of former Ambassador Dunn, who is being held hostage. The response asks the kidnappers to take into account the efforts made and not to demand conditions that exceed the capabilities of either South Africa or the Dunn family. I am the intermediary and hope that clandestine elements will deliver this correspondence, to which I have added a letter of my own in which I pledge to save Mr. Dunn's life.

.

We spoke with Father Moreno and Monsignor Urioste about issues concerning the Secretariat for Social Communications.

We expected an interview with members of the Popular Revolutionary Block, but they didn't show up.

Thursday, January 10, 1980.

The superior of the College of Divine Providence brought a letter on behalf of the superior general of the Passionist congregation, announcing that they will no longer be able to support the community of the Sisters of San José Villanueva. We privately discussed various aspects of this removal, and the Mother General offered to explain it to me further upon her return at the end of this month.

This morning, three important meetings were held at the archdiocesan office. One with the vicars and chancellors to discuss issues related to certain priests and parish situations; another with the seminary to study the seminarians' reports; and another with Radio Ysax to study the legal aspects of this corporation, the auditor, which currently has no auditor, and, regarding the dissemination of thought, to study Radio Ysax's midday comments.

The main conflict with the new director, Mr. Napoleón Navarro, is that he wants to gain greater insight and even censor this very important aspect; which I believe is justified, but on the other hand, I don't want these valuable comments, already widely heard on our station, to go to waste.

In the afternoon, I received a visit from the Father in charge of Central American Affairs of the Society of Jesus in Rome, along with the Jesuit General Curia. Other Jesuits were also present, with whom we discussed various aspects of our current situation and that of the Church. Father Arrupe sent me a special greeting, to which I also responded with fraternal affection, thanking him for his support and solidarity.

The other important visit this afternoon was that of Defense Minister Colonel García, along with the Undersecretary. They expressed their desire for transformation in the country and the unfairness of being accused of being an extremist within the movement.

In particular, he referred to my complaint on Sunday, in which I called for this minister's resignation, as I thought appropriate, given that all the other ministers have resigned and he continues to be a figure who undermines the credibility of this process of transforming the country. We had a long conversation that lasted almost two hours.

Members of the Emmanuel Church also came to see me to discuss issues related to the upcoming Ecumenical Week. Finally, Father Gregorio Rosa made some comments on the work I intend to present in Belgium, some of which I still need to clarify.

Friday, January 11, 1980.

This morning, there were several private visits, but some were more official and significant, such as the interview with the director of Radio Ysax, to clarify the issue of the midday comment. The conflict arose primarily because of a comment regarding Salvador Samayoa's decision to go underground, joining the Fpl after serving as Minister of Education. The comment was presented almost as a praise of this position and an encouragement to others to continue, as there currently appears to be no other option.

This seemed to incite insurrection, and for this reason, its publication on the radio was not authorized, which caused tension within the commentary team. Father Estrada came to speak with the director, Navarro, and with Monsignor Urioste, and was convinced of the reasons that led to the suppression of this commentary. For my part, I begged them to continue providing this service of solidarity, in keeping with the stance of our Church.

Another important visit was that of Dr. Rubén Zamora, of the Christian Democratic Party, who came more as a private citizen seeking some strength, consolation, and guidance, since this is an extremely difficult time for the party, having been left almost alone to save the country, while, on the other side, there are popular organizations uniting to fight this alliance of the Christian Democratic Party with the army.

I tried to tell him that, as a man of faith and hope, he must serve the country generously, and that the same vicissitudes and risks must be accepted with honesty of intention; I believe he was satisfied with his advice, which was rather spiritual in nature. For my part, I believe I must encourage the hope of all those who feel the concern for the country in such a difficult moment.

The new manager, very well-intentioned, also came to tell me about the evident disturbances in the Caritas office. I told her I knew nothing about it. Discouraged. This was precisely why he had been called: to help us make a real Caritas of the Archdiocese work.

Father Ramón Vega, who will be secretary of the Social Secretariat, will also be responsible for Caritas. I have signed several appointments for assistant vicars. I have also entrusted the chaplaincy of the Sarà nursing home to Father Bernardo Amaya. The Oratory Fathers, who were dissolved and are seeking work in the Archdiocese, serving the parishes of Colonia Luz and 10 de Septiembre, have organized themselves into a team to administer these two parishes.

Father Brito showed me a rather impressive letter from Father Fernando Abad, who is in Colombia, somewhat uncertain about his pastoral and diocesan situation. I sent him a message to tell him to come, that there was a lot of work and that we had organized so that we don't feel like you're in this difficult psychological situation you're experiencing.

Deacon Pedro García, originally from The Ceja, Colombia, made a bad impression on me because he wanted to push his desire to become a priest as soon as possible and

refused to undergo the ordeal of the diaconate, which, based on experience, we must impose in our diocese. His last act was a letter in which he asked for the excardination, because he cannot work in line with our Archdiocese and which already has a bishop who will receive him. We will go and ask which bishop you are referring to, because I have to report his attitude, but first I will call him pastorally to reconsider his steps.

In the afternoon, a very important visit from a journalist who covers eighty newspapers and we had an interview of more than an hour in which, thank God, I learned to express it with LaThe Church's position as clearly as possible. He told me that throughout the country and in the various sectors he spoke with, there is great esteem and solidarity towards me, so I thanked him, telling him that my attitude was precisely one of freedom to judge everyone's actions in the light of the Gospel, and, without a doubt, for this reason the truth will always shine.

In the evening, Father Paulino, who will be in charge of the group of students, came to see me to discuss the final details of their residence in our diocese. It was agreed that they will take charge of the parish of Lourdes, and to this end, he will be informed. I have already told Father Cortez, as Vicar General, that I have informed Father Mateo Quijada that the parish of Lourdes, until now entrusted to him, will be ordered toThis Pauline community. The Pauline students, like the Passionists before them, will be responsible, in addition to their seminary studies, for this pastoral task of the Parish of Lourdes.

I also received a visit from a Catholic and two Baptists who are organizing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. I thanked them for their initiative and offered them my full support, since ecumenism is one of the ideas promoted by the Council for the modern Church.

I also spoke with a young, progressive entrepreneur who senses the dire conflict of the moment, facing an oligarchy to which he belongs by economic category, but from which he is far removed in social sensitivity. He and others with similar sentiments are trying to collaborate in the country's transformation and are asking for guidance and support, which I have gladly provided.

I received further calls from several people who wanted to speak with me and we finished our task late at night, but with the satisfaction of having done something for the Kingdom of God.

I forgot to mention that Father Chus Delgado and Aníbal Romero also helped me better express my pastoral sentiments in the speech that, God willing, I will give at the University of Louvain, on the occasion of my honorary degree, on February 2.

Saturday, January 12, 1980.

Around noon, Colonel Gutiérrez called me from the Presidential Palace to ask if I could mediate in the matter of the occupation of the Panamanian Embassy, where the Costa Rican Ambassador is also being held hostage. A graduate of the Legal Assistance program, representing the Archbishopric, went to speak with the occupiers, the Popular Leagues, but they refused to accept this mediation, since the Venezuelan and Mexican Ambassadors had already requested it. I responded to Colonel Gutiérrez, who thanked us, at the very least, for our goodwill.

But the situation at the Panamanian embassy remained the same.

In the afternoon, we learned that the two Guadalupe nuns had been taken hostage in Arcatao by a National Guard member, who had himself been captured by a grassroots organization. We contacted the Minister of Defense, who ordered the National Guard to investigate. Fortunately, at midnight, the nuns returned and reported that they had indeed been held captive, separated, with the threat that if the guard captured by the group did not show up, they would be killed.

I had lunch with priests Fabián Amaya, Monsignor Urioste, Rafael Urrutia, and Doris Osegueda to receive advice on the current situation this week. The Church's approach to this consultation is interesting, and I consider it necessary for my homily.

In the afternoon, a Mexican journalist, who covers approximately eighty newspapers, spoke. The conversation, which lasted over an hour, was very interesting about the situation in the country and the role the Church is playing at this time.

Sunday, January 13, 1980.

I celebrated Mass as usual. Sunday InThe Cathedral was well attended. The theme was the baptism of Our Lord and our own baptism, which commits us to be better citizens. Applause, as on other occasions, was shared. Television reporters from Guatemala and other countries were also present.

After the mass, some factory workers went on strikeThey took control of the Cathedral. They told me it wasn't an offense to the Church, but rather a request to apply pressure to talk to the employers, who refuse to participate in this strike, which affects

many workers. They asked me to act as a mediator to approach the employers and initiate a dialogue with them.

I offered my services, but I also told them that this attitude of occupying the temple was inappropriate because it would interfere with the worship of our Church; nevertheless, they remained busy all day.

After Mass, I held a press conference and a televised press conference, where the usual questions were asked about the situation in the country. Journalists are afraid, which is why they say they will have to follow any outcome here in El Salvador, especially if it is bloody. Let's hope the men are prudent and know how to negotiate in time. It's unfortunate that many people are emboldened by this spirit of violence and are already calling for a popular uprising.

In the afternoon, I went to San Pedro Perulapán, where Father Solórzano was leading a meeting of lay people from across the department of Cuscatlán. I spoke with them and it was clear that there are very capable lay people there who are a source of hope for our Church.

During the Mass, Sister Beatriz, one of the two captured in Arcatao, spoke and explained the situation in Arcatao, where they had been threatened if they did not report by two in the afternoon.I am returned to the prison guard, they would have carried out a very cruel operation in that region.

Appeals were made both to those holding the guard to return him, and to the Guard itself, not to act in a spirit of revenge.

An ecumenical commission took advantage of the homily to invite everyone to celebrate the Octave of Unity, which, as always, will be held from January 18 to 25.

Monday, January 14, 1980.

This morning we had the meeting of the Senate Priest;There was talk of my upcoming trip to Belgium. I was advised to travel to Rome with objective reports to counter any bias that might creep in. There was also talk of the renewal of the Senate and the Vicars next March.

Then we analyze in depth the political situation of the country and enjoy a lot seeing the maturity of my priests in this realistic reflection, even though they have different criteria in politics.

However, there is only one pastoral vision and I have noticed growth in the sense of the Church. Therefore, I congratulated them and asked them to continue to advise me so that, in this turbulent sea of national politics, our Church can be guided with evangelical and pastoral criteria that make it useful, precisely in this whirlwind that surrounds us.

I was expecting a message from the Liberation Forces regarding the kidnapping of the South African ambassador, but they haven't arrived; I hope they'll return tomorrow with a meaningful response.

In the evening I had a psychological analysis with Dr. Semsch, who reiterates thatThe position I'm trying to take is the correct one; a vertical line that honors the

preaching and mentality of the Church. We analyzed some negative points, and it was a very psychologically enriching reflection for me.

That day, I also visited the two Guadalupe nuns who had recently suffered in their community in Arcatao. There, a group of grassroots organizations captured a National Guard member and attempted to take the two nuns hostage. Already a brother who worked with them in Arcatao took them to prison and threatened them that if the National Guard didn't show up, they would suffer the consequences: they would be killed!

Here we went to the Government and thanks to this intervention they went to withdraw, which seemed a very difficult thing, since the director of the Guard himself said that when these agents were insurgents, they did not obey any authority, but, thank God, the nuns were able to return.

They arrived at midnight, almost two in the morning, and were delivered after passing through the Guard headquarters, in the Archbishop's Palace, where they were received by Father Rafael Urrutia and Father Salvador Colorado. They are deeply saddened by the suffering of those people, because, if the guard had not appeared, without that there would be revenge very cruel in that whole sector.

Late that night, the principal of the Guadalupano School called me to tell me that the Superior General had ordered the two nuns to leave for Mexico, until the danger they might face there was over.

They they object ThatIt wasn't so serious and they could spend a few days at the College itself. However, this is a superior order, and tomorrow the Vicar General, Bishop Urioste, will go to speak with the Guadalupana Sisters to express the opinion of our

Archbishopric and see if, through this dialogue, the situation can be addressed more calmly.

Tuesday, January 15, 1980.

This famous feast of the Lord of Esquipulas is celebrated in our Archdiocese in San Bartolomé Perulapía, Colón, and Aguilares, where the Holy Christ is attributed the title of Lord of Mercies. I went to celebrate Mass in this community; the church was packed. We were about to inaugurate the health center there, run by a very dedicated doctor, along with Father Octavio Cruz and the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart. There are many catechists and very vibrant communities, memories of Father Grande and the Jesuits who worked so intensely in that ministry.

I was very satisfied with the life of that liturgy. My message was to focus on "Christ crucified with his mystery of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection" as the path and goal of human advancement that we must all pursue in our evangelization.

In the afternoon, FPL messengers arrived to deliver the response from the family of Mr. Dunn, the kidnapped former South African ambassador. I sent a response to the FPL through the people in charge of this communication. It contained the response from Mr. Dunn's family and also a letter from me, in which I invoked the values of humans so that this poor man, whose wife is seriously ill, is given freedom.

Connected to this same kidnapping were Mr. Ernesto Rivas Gallont and another relative who, independently of Mr. Ernesto, would like me to better represent the family and be the only way to expedite the resolution of this painful matter.

A delegate from the Popular Revolutionary Block also came to speak, and we met with him and Father Rafael Moreno. Their analytical ability and the clarity of their political ideas are admirable. For our part, we were more interested in what was relevant to the Church's mission.

Together with an ecumenical group, I prepared the recording for tomorrow's interview. A very enjoyable and engaging topic was ecumenism, which was explored in various aspects in a natural conversation.

Bishop Urioste informed me of his visit to the Guadalupe Sisters, who are determined to bring the two persecuted nuns of Arcatao to Mexico. He also informed me of his meeting with Radio Ysax commentators to resolve an impasse the program has encountered.I have some remaining things to solve lately.

CHAPTER 25.

Year 1980.

Diary from January 16th to 22nd.

1980.

Wednesday, January 16, 1980.

Since yesterday evening, around eleven o'clock, Father Fermín Sáinz has been announcing to me the visit of the wife of Don Jaime Hill, kidnapped by the Erp (Popular Revolutionary Army), and they have scheduled his execution for today, at seven o'clock in the evening, if the conditions they have established are not met. They have confidentially explained to me that the money is worth approximately twenty million colones, and that they have done everything possible to obtain it, but have not been able to obtain it.

Given the bank freeze and other laws that make it impossible for them to obtain, even a loan, such an exorbitant amount, and they have come to me asking for mediation, I should say a few words on the radio, so that the kidnappers can hear them, about the family's difficult situation, asking for an extension of this peremptory deadline and for negotiations to cover those conditions as much as possible.

In this sense I made a recording because they broadcast it on Radio Ysax and they also broadcast it on other radio programs.

I then departed for San Miguelito, in Chalatenango, where Corpus Christi was being celebrated. The arrival was warm. The children carried pine branches and a moving climb up to the sanctuary and the schoolchildren, where the well-attended Mass was celebrated. During the Mass, several lay people spoke and expressed, in a simple but very cordial manner, their solidarity with the parish priest.

When I returned that afternoon, I was eager to see a response to my appeal, but I only found confirmation of the conditions published by some radio stations, which stated that they would extend the deadline, but only for a short time, and that this family could very well use their money abroad, and that they would not accept further negotiations.

I also received a visit from Father Estrada with Eddie Stein, who handles the midday program and commentary on Radio Ysax. I also noticed the convenience of having him as the station's voice, but I asked them to stay. Send preventive censorship to avoid the conflicts that led to the suspension of this program in recent days.

I also spoke by telephone with Monsignor Rivera to express my surprise regarding the Episcopal Conference and my intention not to participate in the next meeting.

I received a phone call from Archbishop Marcos McGrath of Panama, who had been asked to make an appeal regarding the aforementioned kidnapping. He told me he had done so, thinking I wouldn't mind, and that he had taken the opportunity to call for peaceful solutions in El Salvador. I also learned that the Archbishop of San José, Costa Rica, had addressed the issue on Central American Radio.

I interviewed a Brazilian journalist about the situation in the country and the role of the Church. A three-day study series on Basic Ecclesial Communities began today at Domus Mariae. Unfortunately, I got the date wrong, and… I am committed toI'm planning a trip to La Palma in the next two days, so I asked Monsignor Urioste to be present and to pay close attention to the ecclesial significance of this meeting. According to what he told me, the first day's work had been very positive and he had no major concerns, as everything was proceeding well.

Today we finished the speech he will give in Belgium, and tomorrow, God willing, I will airmail it for immediate delivery. The details of my trip have also been finalized. I will fly to Madrid, Rome, and from there to Belgium, to take care of some business in

Rome with the Congregations of Bishops and the Seminary, and to visit Archbishop Pironio and, if possible, the Secretariat of State.

Thursday, January 17, 1980.

I had breakfast with Monsignor Rivera and we discussed the situation of the Episcopal Conference and our pastoral relations.

Then I went to La Palma, where Father Vito Guaratto prepared for me two days of pastoral visit.

We immediately left La Palma for San Ignacio, the daughter town of this parish, where a small but loving group of Christians welcomed me and we celebrated a beautiful Confirmation and First Communion ceremony in the church. At the end, we chatted with the group that assists Father most closely, and they asked me about electricity. There was a community of nuns and we spoke with the Father about the possibility of taking two or three Franciscan nuns.

We had lunch in La Palma and immediately headed for the steep road leading to the picturesque peaks of Las Pilas. Our jeep broke down halfway, but we took advantage of the other jeep provided by the nuns who work in Citalá, another hamlet of La Palma.

We passed a place called Miramundo, the highest peak in El Salvador, at 2,200 meters above sea level. From there, we descended a little towards the picturesque pine-lined Las Pilas Valley, where other peaks converge. We celebrated a beautiful Eucharist outside the church because there was no room for the crowd. The welcome was

very warm, and several First Communions and Confirmations were celebrated, prepared by local catechists.

We descended at night, after listening to many messages from those fervent Catholics. The Holy Spirit works wonders in these simple people, who, moreover, are inspired by the Revolution in the Spirit, which this Franciscan Father promotes with remarkable balance.

After a peaceful night in La Palma, we held a morning meeting with the faithful from various parish areas. The church was packed, I heard many confessions, imparted general absolution on the condition that confession be made later, and celebrated first communions and many confirmations, all well prepared. That evening, we met with the parish's key officials who work with the pastor.

I then visited with Father the work he is doing: a center that is a true rural university, with a lot of work, but very well done, where courses, spiritual retreats, etc. will be held.

The outcome of this visit is very positive and seems to me to be characterised by an awareness of the Holy Spirit,through confirmation catechesis. I understood that they are people very capable of grasping this revelation that Christ has brought us through the Holy Spirit, and that they live it with great intensity, with great piety.

I thanked them for that treasure of prayer that emerges there and which is like the lungs, the breath of the Church.

After lunch, filled with gifts and affection from those people, I returned to San Salvador, where a very intense afternoon awaited me.

If inaugurated tonight the ecumenical meeting took place; eight days of prayer for Christian unity. But I was unable to attend the inauguration because there were very important guests at the Divine Providence Hospital, who addressed the problems that abound these days. We also had a dinner to reflect on the reality of El Salvador, which I found very enlightening, despite the complexity of the situation.

Friday, January 18, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Saturday, January 19, 1980.

This morning's general assembly of the Confreres was marked by my addressing the topic of service to religious life in the country's current situation, inviting them to identify with the Archdiocese's approach, since knowing how to adapt to the pastoral care of the particular Church in which they work is one of the hallmarks of religious authenticity.

I have received visits from the families of the kidnapped, the Hill family, and the former South African ambassador. And they have hope, they have great faith in the Church, they turn to it, and they appreciate every intervention. Above all, I try to give

them comfort and great trust in God, to accept whatever He decides and to keep their spirits high, to pray and trust.

Father Moreno, Miss Doris, and Father Rafael Urrutia met with me to prepare a summary of the week that I will use for my homily.

Sunday, January 20, 1980.

With the Cathedral occupied by unions demanding the reopening of their factories, which they claim were unfairly closed. The Church also intervened in this dispute, attempting to call the employers to dialogue, but to no avail, and so the Cathedral remains occupied. We had to celebrate Sunday Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart with the usual crowd.

The Gospel passage of the wedding at Cana offered me the opportunity to deliver a homily of optimism and joy, because God wanted to reveal the Mystery of Christ and the Redemption under the sign of a wedding banquet and, despite the difficulties and problems, such as the one the Virgin Mary encountered at that wedding, he always trusted in the Church because Christ is present in problems and difficulties.

After Mass, I went to San Francisco de Mejicanos, where a prayer vigil and profession of faith were being held. The ceremony began in San Antonio Abad, where Father Octavio Ortiz and four young men on retreat died a year ago. The retreat took place in front of the church of San Francisco, in the institute under construction at the Carmelite Sisters. A large crowd attended the Mass, which we concelebrated with the priests of the Mejicanos vicariate and other friends of Father Octavio.

In the homily I preached on the two realms of our Christian liberating message: transcendence, from where Octavio and the dead speak to us, the end and destiny of our kingdom on earth, and the earth, where we still have our feet planted, to embody that transcendent message, to the extent that we work here For the liberation of our people, for the Christian redemption of the world, we too will have a part in that heaven which is the transcendent reward for the toils of the earth.

It was hard for me to leave because there were so many people saying goodbye.

I went to lunch with the Oblate Sisters of Divine Love at the Holy Family School. I was very disappointed not to have accepted the parish priest's invitation. He and all the priests would have had lunch at Mejicanos, but I had made a commitment to this religious community, and they were already waiting to take me.

In the afternoon, I met again with the families of the kidnapped victims. I also received a message from the kidnappers of the former South African ambassador, and we discussed the difficult circumstances proposed as conditions. In this regard, the former ambassador's daughter also called me from the United States, deeply distressed. I tried to encourage and guide you towards some solutions.steps that can be taken.

That evening, Dr. Saca came to see me, saying goodbye, as he was leaving for the United States with his family to settle in and then return. He told me that Colonel Gutiérrez, a member of the Revolutionary Government Junta, was ill in his clinic, and I asked him to accompany me to see him. We talked, and I tried to encourage him and offer him the comfort the Church usually offers. He seemed quite calm, even though I know the government's problems are very difficult.

Monday, January 21, 1980.

This morning I met with the Presbyteral Senate to continue and update our analysis of the country's situation and, above all, to discuss the attitude we, as a Church, should adopt in the Archdiocese. It was explained that there is a psychosis in the air, as if everyone...I'll wait for a war TheThe demonstration announced for tomorrow by popular political organizations has caused quite a stir, and the anticipation is almost equivalent to anticipating a civil war.

We have analyzed the situation, and it is certainly serious, but our duty as a Church is to maintain hope and overcome all false news and to commit ourselves to living in reality and, above all, in intimate awareness with our God. Instilling this in our communities is our primary duty at this time.

Regarding my trip to Belgium, we had agreed to meet in two days, after the demonstration, to review the situation and decide what to do. The pastoral meeting scheduled for tomorrow has also been postponed due to this anxiety.

Among the visitors who arrived was also the deacon Pedro García. That haThis caused much disappointment. After training him in La Ceja, Colombia, he insists on leaving the diocese because he believes, in good conscience, he cannot follow the pastoral guidelines of our archdiocese.

I tried to convince him of his error and also to make him understand that in our Archdiocese there exists a healthy pluralism, where all tendencies are welcome, as long

as they are legitimately pastoral. However, he is willing to leave. I set two conditions: first, that he tell me which diocese he would be traveling to, so that I could provide a conscientious account and thus fulfill my responsibility; and second, that he would reimburse the Archdiocese for the financial expenses incurred.

There have also been contacts with the kidnappers of the former South African ambassador, who are asking for information about the doctor who told me I could go see him. I took advantage of this by sending her other information they should know, always in favor of the release of this poor kidnapped person.

On the radio, regarding commentary, I've tried to push people not to give in to cowardice; true prudence, yes; censorship, this too is rational, but we mustn't abandon program commentary, because it's very useful for guiding our audiences in this confusing time.

The most heartwarming event of the day was the celebration we held at noon in Apulo, at the Santa Teresita house, where the Seminary for Late Vocations was inaugurated. A group of young people who thought attending the seminary was impossible for them, together with Father Fabián, Episcopal Vicar of Chalatenango, found an experience that refreshed their studies and allowed them to continue their ecclesiastical studies.

It was wonderful to hear them speak, the joy of their reborn hope. Along with this experience, we were touched by the promise of three young people, who for several months have been contemplating the idea of forming a community, making year-long religious vows, and living incarnately in the community of Ilopango. Another experience we shared was that of five Carmelites who have left the congregation, but who will

continue united without abandoning their religious spirit and service to the communities of the Archdiocese.

They live in Guazapa, and upon my return from Belgium, we will celebrate their incorporation into that community. It was also on this occasion, when the Holy Spirit manifested so many gifts, that I confirmed a Jesuit novice who will continue his preparation in Panama and who received, in that very charismatic environment, this precious gift of the Holy Spirit.

Tuesday, January 22, 1980.

That day was marked by tragedy. Popular political organizations are said to have organized a joint demonstration. That is the largest in the entire history of our nation.

Indeed, from the monument to the Divine Savior, they marched toward the center of San Salvador for blocks and blocks; but a gunfight broke out at the National Palace, interrupting this splendid demonstration, a celebration of the people. They took refuge in churches, warehouses, and throughout the surrounding areas, but several dead remained in the streets, as did many wounded, who were taken to medical centers while the dead were collected after being examined by magistrates. That evening, there were eleven bodies in the Cathedral alone.

It was a mystery because they contacted me immediately from the Presidential Palace, alarmed by what had happened and assuring me that the security forces...

This day is marked by tragedy. In 1932, on this day, General Martínez's great massacre against the so-called communist insurrection began throughout the West. In commemoration of that anniversary, a demonstration by popular political organizations and other left-wing organizations was organized in San Salvador.

It's said to be the largest demonstration in the nation's history. Indeed, the demonstration started from the Monument to the Divine Savior and headed toward the center of San Salvador, filling blocks and blocks. At the National Palace, shrapnel began to blast the protesters, scattering in all directions, leaving several dead and many injured in the streets.

Many took refuge in the Cathedral, others in the Church of the Rosary and in other places where they could enter.

I received a communication from the Presidential Palace from Engineer Héctor Dada, a member of the Revolutionary Government Junta, informing me that the shots did not come from the security forces, because they were all quartered and that some disguised military officers had been noticed participating in this demonstration. He also stated that the complaint filed by Marianela García, a member of the Human Rights Committee of El Salvador, from the Rosario church was false. She said that there were police officers near the church asking them to retreat, because there were no such police officers, according to the government report. The shots found did not belong to the security forces, etc.

On the other hand, journalists present at the event and numerous witnesses indicated that the guards on the balcony of the National Palace had opened fire on the crowd; some maintain that there had been provocation before the guards' action. The

incident remains highly unclear, and on behalf of our Church, we have calmly launched an investigation to formulate our own judgment.

We tried to contribute to this tragedy by helping evacuate the people in the Cathedral, about 300 refugees, who were taken to the Archbishop's Palace, where they received food and shelter. The nuns and other Catholic institutions here were very generous in offering this assistance on behalf of the Church. But most of the population took refuge in the University, where an estimated 40,000 people live. It was a tragic night.

There were bombs in various parts of the city; one of them was undoubtedly planted by the far right on the antenna of our Catholic radio station, Radio Ysax, which suffered some damage, though not serious. Domus Mariae, where the antenna is located, was also damaged.suffered in their buildings.

In another speech at the Presidential Palace, I asked Sigfrido Munés, head of the Information Secretariat, not to connect private stations to the large National Radio network because this would have taken away spontaneity and pluralism of information; but Mr.Munéshe replied that it was a tactic to avoid misrepresentation and that all services will have to be unified through the National Radio.

I insisted that this not happen permanently, yet the national network remained in place, thus depriving the various broadcasters that until then had provided such a valuable social and informational service of any initiative and participation. Further communications with the government and various sectors of the population were conducted through the mediation voluntarily provided by the Church.

As for the work of the Curia, today it has been almost entirely absorbed by this psychosis of our people, and there has been no shortage of visits to the Archbishopric, even under the anxiety of this situation of violence.

CHAPTER 26.

Year 1980.

Diary from January 23rd to February 4th.

1980.

Wednesday, January 23, 1980.

From the very beginning, we were asked to intervene to remove the military cordon that had been established around the National University, where more than 40,000 people felt trapped and were demanding that the military cordon be removed so they could leave and return home.

From the Presidential Palace, where we went with this request, we were told that the purpose of this cordon was not to imprison those at the University, but to protect them from right-wing attacks, which were the ones that caused yesterday's tragedy, and which could continue their attacks against organized groups once they left the University. For this reason, these checkpoints had been set up: to prevent them from harassing the public.

We insisted that people might not understand this interpretation. We were asked to send a commission from the Archbishopric, along with the Red Cross and the Human Rights Commission, to intervene at the University, where the crowd was already rioting against the guards. We could have tried to convince them that the blockade would be lifted and to be prudent and calm in leaving, and not to misunderstand the military siege.

Father Cortés, Vicar General, Father Jesús Delgado, Father Rafael Moreno, and Roberto Cuéllar, who intervened at the National University, managed to remove the military cordon and allow the crowd to leave peacefully.

In the afternoon, there was a gathering in the park next to the Cathedral and at the Cathedral itself, where I celebrated Mass for the deceased, surrounded by several priests, and addressed the crowd surrounding the coffins. The burial did not take place this afternoon, but tomorrow morning, which surprised me, given that I had been invited to attend the burial Mass. But that's how these organizations work: they distort or mislead matters for their own purposes. In any case, the Cathedral is providing this service to the poor.

This morning I had two important meetings: one with the Senate of the Presbyterates to analyze what happened in yesterday's demonstration and, more importantly, to take immediate action, including the commission that went to the University to mediate. We agreed to continue our analysis tomorrow, especially to determine the role of the Church at this time.

The other meeting took place at the convent of the Parish of the Asunción, in Flor Blanca, with the Archbishop's Heritage Management Commission. We analyzed the work this commission is carrying out with such dedication and goodwill, and at the same time,

we highlighted the shortcomings in its functioning and that of some members of the Archbishopric. I sought to grant greater authority to this commission and to reorganize the financial management of our Archbishopric, which will be entirely entrusted to the Heritage Management Commission.

In the afternoon, I had three important visits, at the recommendation of Monsignor Urioste and Father Estrada. The first was the U.S. Ambassador, along with the Undersecretary of State, who is well-versed in Central American and Caribbean affairs. It was an hour-long visit, during which we thoroughly analyzed the situation and noted the United States' support for the government. They confidentially told us various aspects of their plans and their benevolence toward El Salvador, and we also expressed our opinions very frankly.

The second visit was by members of the Supreme Court of Justice, who, concerned about yesterday's events, are seeking to conduct an investigation and, therefore, visited the Church, which they praised for its informational work and its accuracy in reporting complaints, as well as for its work on behalf of victims of abuse in our country. We spoke at length and realized these lawyers' desire to give the Supreme Court of Justice all the prestige the judiciary enjoys in a democratic system, which, according to them, has very dead bodies due to the traditions of our people, but which must be activated to defend the justice of the people.

There was a very conversational cordial and, above all, with very patriotic ideals. The third visit was that of the Spanish ambassador, along with the representative for Latin American affairs. We discussed Spanish and American affairs at length, also briefly analyzing the situation in El Salvador, which was of most interest to this representative of

the Spanish government. He noted that my name is well known in Spain and conveyed his congratulations and greetings for the pastoral work we are carrying out here.

Even later, during the night, Engineer Rosa, brother of Father Gregorio Rosa, arrived.talk to me to land his experiences and his testimony on yesterday's demonstration, while he was on the terrace of the Cathedral and was able to observe up close the actions at the National Palace, in particular those of the National Guard group which, according to him, evidently fired on the crowd.

That same day, in the Council of the Presbyteral Senate, we agreed that my trip was inappropriate at a time of suffering for the population. However, the remaining days would decide, and in any case, I entrusted Father Gregorio Rosa with organizing a trip that would require the shortest possible time and, if possible, hosting a representative on site.

Father Goyo spoke with Father Juan Deplanck Lencho in Belgium, but told him that it would be preferable to cut short the activities he had planned for ten days in Belgium, but that he shouldn't miss the trip, even if it were only to receive the honorary degree offered to me by the University of Louvain. In any case, a very short trip has been arranged for me, but I will decide in the next few days whether or not to go.

Thursday, January 24, 1980.

A phone call from Father Juan Deplanck Lencho from Belgium prompted me to decide to travel to that country. He explained that several arrangements had been made and that, although he could significantly shorten the program, he still believed it was

essential for me to come at least so I could receive my honorary degree in Louvain. He also agreed that the situation in our country was very serious and that he would do everything possible to shorten this trip as much as possible.

In his opinion, and I agree, it's a service to the Diocese. It supports our pastoral work, and in this sense, I believe I should make the sacrifice of going. He therefore arranged for me to leave on Monday of next week so that I can be there on Saturday, after stopping in Rome, where I have commitments. On Monday, if Father Juan requests it again, I can begin my return journey on Tuesday of the following week.

We held a meeting of the Presbyteral Senate, which meets more frequently to analyze the country's difficult situation and better fulfill the Church's mission. The analysis was very candid, and it provided the basis for drafting a newsletter reflecting the Church's perspective on the riots that ended the demonstration two days ago.

There are many refugees at the Seminary, originally from villages where they are being persecuted, but they are now leaving. The Senate has been informed of the Church representatives' efforts to evict refugees from the University after the military cordon was lifted. It is difficult to understand the true motive behind these military actions, since, according to civilians in the junta, they are intended to protect the refugees themselves; while organizations and the public suspect they are aimed at suppressing grassroots demonstrations.

I spoke at length with my brother about the organization of the Archdiocese's financial administration and the administrative procedures for managing its assets. He and the Fathers of the Commission are willing to provide sound advice.

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Passionist Sisters, who serve the city of San José Villanueva, also came to visit the Archbishopric. They will have to leave this commission to renew their vows. We emphasized the importance of not abandoning this field, and even though it is located within the community of the Colegio de la Divina Providencia, they can continue to care for it. Mother promised to study the case and resolve it before leaving for Mexico.

At night, at the hospital, I received a visit from the director of Caritas, who informed me about theI work with refugees, but it could be misunderstood, as I have reservations about grassroots political organizations. I told him that in these cases, human need and Christian charity prevail.

In the evening, a representative of the Fapu also arrived. Father Rafael Moreno accompanied me on the visit, and we discussed for about two hours the Fapu's analysis of the situation and its peaceful solution, which offers, from a perspective of unity, an alliance between grassroots organizations, the youth military, and the healthy part of the government, all for the benefit of the people.

Father Moreno emphasized that this proposal is in line with what I said last Sunday in my homily. And for my part, I offered the Church's full cooperation in uniting efforts to save the country.

Friday, January 25, 1980.

This morning, the provincial of the Spanish Carmelite Missionaries came to visit me. This congregation was responsible for the care of the Salvadoran Polyclinic and two

ecclesial communities of the archdiocese, Plan del Pino and La Laguna, in Chalatenango. We spoke at length about the work they do and the situation in the country, and she expressed her satisfaction with the work in this Church; for which I thanked her.

This morning, a commission from the Puca, the Central American Union Party, also came to ask me to support the Church's advocacy for Central American unity, which they believe is the best solution to the crisis in each Central American country. They specifically asked me to help obtain legal status and transfer the offices and functions of the Odeca to this party, which is the one most likely to take an interest. Business Central Americans.

A It's noonMonsignor Bambarén, bishop of a diocese in Peru and president of the Celam Social Commission, also came. He said he had come specifically to visit me and also to invite a representative to the next meeting of the Celam commission, which will be held in Panama.

When I told him that the president of this commission at the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador was Bishop Aparicio, he replied that he wasn't interested in it, given his experiences in Puebla, where this bishop had caused much unrest, and that it would be better to invite someone else, even if only as a guest. We spoke to Bishop Rivera over the phone, and he gladly accepted the invitation.

We spoke at length with Archbishop Bambarén about our situation; I found him very understanding and in complete agreement with the pastoral approach of our Archdiocese.That him tooIn Peru the situation is similar and has been the subject of contradictions, as it has been here.

He stayed here in my room and shared the life of this community. While he was out for a walk, I met with the Vicars General and the Chancellors to discuss his absence during my trip to Belgium. Archbishop Urioste is of the opinion that I should not go, given the gravity of the current circumstances, but on reflection, as Father Juan Deplanck Lencho of Belgium told me, I would be doing the Church a service and strengthening our personal presence with the honor that the University of Louvain is preparing for me there. Therefore, I believe I should go and leave the Curia officials with sufficient authority here for as short a period as possible, a period of about five or seven days.

Saturday, January 26, 1980.

This morning I went to drop off Monsignor Bambarén at the airport, and he was very cordial and very happy.

He asked me to give him a collection of homilies. I promised to send them to him, since I don't have them handy. He said he read the one from last Sunday during orientation and found it very good. He would like more copies, more homilies. I'd be happy to send them to him, which was a great encouragement to me.

I had a meeting to prepare the homily; Father Ellacuría and Father Estrada were there before me. We discussed the situation in El Salvador, in the United States, where Father Ellacuría had just passed through. They seemed alarmed by my last homily, in which I spoke of a grassroots project and did not fully support the Christian Democrats, because for the United States, the solution is the Christian Democrats, who promise to help.

We said it wasn't about pleasing the United States or anyone else, but rather about finding the solution best suited to our country. And the advisors agreed with what I said in the homily. We continued to discuss a statement Father Moreno had written about the demonstration dispersed by gunfire after hearing the Senate's opinion.

I think it's very positive. The opinions of others have also been enriched, and many of the bloody cases that occurred this week will be reported. Always highlighting the pastoral and evangelical aspect of the Church.

That evening, as Father Moreno told me, he came with another young man from the clandestine groups to talk about their political plans, and I had the opportunity to express the Church's feelings regarding the violent solutions promoted by these organizations, which have caused so much damage in recent times.

They already have their own ideology and way of thinking, and it's difficult to change them. I believe that praying for all these people is the best way to work with them and offer the country a solution that isn't based on bloodshed, hatred, or violence.

Sunday, January 27, 1980.

Once again, Mass had to be celebrated in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, as the Cathedral was still occupied. The attendance was very large, and the theme "Christ the Prophet, Prologue and Beginning of His Ministry," taken from the Gospel of Saint Luke, gave me the opportunity to explain the meaning of the homily, for when Christ says, "This has been fulfilled today," he delivers a true homily, a living incarnation of the Word of God.

I also referred to the most important event of the week, the demonstration that ended in tragedy, and after consulting several priests, I analyzed the responsibility of a time when everyone must abandon polarized attitudes and dedicate themselves to uniting different ways of thinking, to ensure the common good of the country. After the Mass, I held a press conference.

There were people from English television, journalists from Switzerland, the United States and Mexico and we always discussed the situation in the country and the role of the Church.

At noon, as announced, Colonel Majano of the Revolutionary Government Junta arrived. He is very modest in his private manner. We discussed the situation and his plans at length. They are concerned about the current situation, but confident of gaining the support of the people they seek to serve.

I made my observations to them, just as I had made them in the homily, namely that the interesting thing was to sincerely associate with the people, take their organizations into account and remove the aspect of repression from them, since this repression gives the impression that they do not control the National Guard.Alreadyother security forces and that, with these acts of revenge and violence by these security forces, they undermine the prestige and credibility of any goodwill the Government may have.

We had lunch with the nuns at the hospital. Colonel Majano was very friendly and also offered various services to the nuns at this hospital.

I spent the afternoon packing for tomorrow's trip to Europe. However, I had several commitments at my desk and had to attend to some visitors, such as Father Alliet, who brought me the addresses of Belgian priests and nuns who work among us and whom I hope to visit.

Furthermore, a meeting we were supposed to hold with the National Coordination Committee of Organizations had to be canceled because only representatives of the Popular Leagues showed up, while the others had excused themselves for other activities, including the burial of deceased members of the Udn. I went to see the Nuncio, who wanted to give me something. It was a letter informing me that I had expressed solidarity with an ecumenical meeting in Brazil and that they had a topic to discuss, criticizing Puebla and the division within the Episcopate. They urged me to take personal responsibility if I attended that meeting.

I explained to the Nuncio that I was surprised I hadn't expressed such solidarity, and that I appreciated the invitation and apologized, as I couldn't leave so soon after my return from Europe. The Nuncio said I would provide this information, and I think he was satisfied.

Upon my return, I spoke on the phone with Mr. Dunn's son, who was kidnapped, and tried to give him some hope and ask us to trust in God.

Monday, January 28, 1980.

ThatThat day I embarked on my journey to Belgium to receive an honorary degree from the University of Louvain. The route they organized for me included a

Pan-American Highway ride to Guatemala, Miami, Madrid, and Rome, where I would work for two days.then Louvain, Belgium. At eight in the morning the plane left, after sharing a farewell with my sister, with the religious family and some priests. The tour was very picturesque and I felt very rested, even though I'm still worried about what might happen in my country.

But as I was leaving, Mother Luz, superior of the Hospital of Divine Providence, reminded me that that morning we had prayed in the psalms: "The Lord Patient Alhis people", and that it was peaceful, that we all pray that the Lord would shepherd this flock that I must leave, even if I do not want it; but to go and fulfill another duty always in the service of the Church, because I believe that receiving this honor is not simply a tribute to me personally, but a support for the pastoral care of our Archdiocese and a general support for all those who work in this line that the Second Vatican Council initiated for the Church.

Around noon we were in Miami, where we waited for several hours, as the plane to Madrid left at 5:00 PM. After a very short night,here we wake up toMadrid, as our clocks struck eleven at night.

Winter makes the morning very dark, it seemed that it wasIt was night, not just seven in the morning when the workers began their journey to work. Around nine in the morning, after a wait at the Madrid airport, we made the final leg of the journey to Rome, with the same emotion as always. For me, Rome means returning to the cradle, the home, the source, the heart, and the brain of our Church. I asked the Lord to preserve this faith and this commitment to Rome, which Christ chose as the seat of the universal pastor, the Pope.

We arrived at the Pensionato Romano, accompanied by Father Giovanni Bosco himself, who had kindly picked us up at the airport, and our first visit, after lunch, was to St. Peter's Basilica. The tour I have always loved to do, the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the tomb of the Apostle St. Peter, the tomb of St. Pius X, Already Letombs of the Popes,where I felt a particular emotion praying beside the tomb of Paul VI, of whom I remembered so many things from his conversations with me, during the visits that I had the honor and joy of being admitted to his private presence.

Afterwards we went to see Cardinal Pironio, but he is very busy with the Synod of Bishops of the Netherlands and will give me a time when he can meet me. We took other walks through the streets near St. Peter's Square; all this reminds me a lot of my years in the seminary at Pio Latino and reviving in me the faith and priestly enthusiasm.

The Dominican nuns invited us to dinner and were very kind to welcome us; but we couldn't agree on a date and arrived before them, and they couldn't find us. They had even prepared a room for us in their house in Monte Mario, and, to reciprocate their generosity, I had the pleasure of dining with them and talking about the events unfolding in our homeland.

Tuesday, January 29, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Wednesday, January 30, 1980.

This day was filled with God's grace and profound satisfaction. It began with a phone call at seven in the morning, which, given the time difference, seemed... very early.

It was Father Juan Deplanck Lencho who was calling from Belgium to greet me and to ask me to extend theMy stay in Belgium until next Monday, so I could go to France, and there was much anticipation for my arrival and conversation with these people. I told them I'd be happy to help you organize my trip for Tuesday, the following day.

Subsequently, respecting the appointment with Monsignor Pironio, I went to the Secretariat of State, we agreed beforehand on our presence at the Holy Father's general audience; I also visited Monsignor Enríquez, responsible for Central American affairs of the Secretariat of State, to tell him that I wanted to speak with him, but he replied that it would be more convenient for me to speak with the Secretary of State himself, Cardinal Casseruola,who would arrange an audience for me. Then I spoke with Cardinal Pironio, a brief but very encouraging interview.

He told me he wanted to see me himself to inform me with pleasure that Cardinal Lorscheider's visit had been very positive and that the Pope himself had a very positive report on me. Cardinal Lorscheider had told Cardinal Pironio that I was happy in El Salvador, that the situation was very difficult, and that I was the one who clearly saw the circumstances and the role of the Church, and that I needed help.

I suppose this is a summary of what Cardinal Lorscheider said about his trip to El Salvador. I thanked Cardinal Pironio profusely and even encouraged him, because he too told me he had suffered greatly, precisely because of this effort on behalf of the peoples of Latin America, and that he understood me perfectly. He reminded me of a phrase from the Gospel that he applies particularly well:

"Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot harm the spirit." He interpreted this to mean that if those who kill the body are terrible, even more terrible are those who torment the spirit, slandering, defaming, and destroying a person. He believed that this was precisely my martyrdom, even within the Church itself, and that I had courage. The summary was a powerful encouragement that later prepared me to approach the interview with the Holy Father during the general audience with greater joy.

At 10:00, we were entering the general audience along with a huge crowd that had arrived in the Paul VI Hall, a huge hall, but packed with faithful singing, applauding, and praying. At 11:00, the Holy Father made his way from the entrance to the dais where he sits, a long walk, waving from one side to the other, and it took almost an hour. The Pope's speech...

His Holiness's address at the general audience on Wednesday, January 30, was an extension of his meditations on Genesis, which he delivered during this general audience. In particular, he spoke of the dignity of man in his two human aspects of the body: virility and femininity, and how happiness lies in innocence, and how shame in the human body is a sign of original sin.

A meditation that I found very beautiful, but also very profound, because I think that many people feel difficulty in understanding SomeoneHe told me that the Pope was

extremely interesting to people in his opening speeches and personal greetings, but that during the speech one had the feeling of being distant and incomprehensible.

It's a shame, because it's a time when people are very attentive and any idea, no matter how simple, that is understood can do a lot of good to the public.

When he had finished the audience, he called the bishops to bless the people with him. I was fortunate enough to be right at his right, and then, when we were greeted by thePope, the bishops told me that after the audience he wanted to speak with me in particular. But I had to wait a little longer because, after the bishops' greetings, a circus began its show. The circus had come to honor the Holy Father and ask for his blessing.

He performed artistic, entertaining, and graceful numbers, which filled the entire audience with joy, including, of course, the Holy Father. He also extended a warm greeting to a choir from his native Poland, with whom he conversed with great cordiality, as well as to the sick and all those who enjoyed privileged positions in the audience.

After this long farewell, in a small room where he had held other special audiences, he welcomed me with great affection, telling me "that he fully understood the difficult political situation in my country and that he was concerned about the role of the Church, that we had to take into account not only the defense of social justice and love for the poor, but also what could be the result of a popular left-wing effort to demand justice, which could also prove harmful to the Church."

I told him, "Holy Father, this is precisely the balance I try to maintain, because, on the one hand, I defend social justice, human rights, and love for the poor. On the other, I am always very concerned about the role of the Church and that, in defending these

human rights, we do not fall into ideologies that destroy human feelings and values." I fully agreed with his speeches and thought they gave me great strength and arguments for my actions and my preaching.

I specifically mentioned his speeches in Mexico, the one in Oaxaca, and said that it was precisely there that my doctrine, what I preach, and what I try to do, was found. I felt that the Pope fully agreed with everything I said, and when he finished, he embraced me in a very fraternal way and told me "that he prayed every day for El Salvador. This felt the confirmation and strength of God for my poor ministry.

It was almost three in the afternoon and I went to the General Curia of the Jesuits, where unfortunately I could not accept Father Arrupe's invitation to have lunch with him, because I had arrived too late. However, I kept AlsoThe conversation with him was extremely interesting. He was pleased with what I had told him in my conversations with Cardinal Pironio and the Holy Father, and he reiterated his solidarity and the support the Jesuits have given me.

He also spoke to me very frankly about the fears that may exist within the Society of Jesus, but also about the good it has, and that the Pope's address to the Jesuits, which caused both outcry and a rebuke, was precisely the opposite; that the Pope loves the Society very much and wants to warn it against possible errors. He doesn't deny that, as human beings, they have their flaws and errors, but that, overall, there is a spirit of great service to the Church.

From the General Curia itself, I managed to arrange a telephone interview with Radio Ysax in El Salvador. I was able to continue Wednesday's interview by phone with Archbishop Urioste, who gave me news from the country-heartbreaking, of course,

because he spoke of massacres and crimes, but also of his work in the Church. For my part, I informed him of my trip and of what I had already said about the audiences I had this morning, and of how I would soon have other interviews of interest to the Archdiocese.

That evening, I received a visit from the Passionist Sisters who live in Piazza San Giovanni e Paolo, and they invited us to dinner. We went with Father Jesús Delgado and the two Jesuit Fathers who were so kind in bringing us here to Rome. It was a very cordial, very fraternal dinner, which once again gave me a breath of fresh air from the fraternity of the Church. These sisters assured me that they pray constantly with me and that they fully share the pastoral line of the Archbishopric.

Having returned to the Pensionato Romano, I received information on tomorrow's talks with the Secretary of State, Cardinal Casseruola, and with Cardinal Baggio, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and we will also try to organize a meeting with the Congregation for Education in the Faith to discuss matters relating to the Seminary. It's already evening, but I'm very happy about a day filled with blessings for the Archdiocese and its pastor.

Thursday, January 31, 1980.

It's another day filled with great satisfaction and many pastoral successes. The first thing I received today was the visit of the South African Ambassador to the Holy See, who came to thank me for my thoughtfulness.in itThe kidnapping of Mr. Dunn, the South African ambassador to El Salvador, who was kidnapped and for whom I am acting as a

mediator. He wanted further information, which I was able to provide, and which gave him great satisfaction, as he claims to be a close friend of Ambassador Dunn.

Two Salvadoran nuns from Bethany, who work here, also came to visit me. I greeted them and asked if they needed anything. They brought a letter for the Superior General, who lives in Santa Tecla.

Then I went to the Secretariat of State, where I had an appointment with Cardinal Casseruola. He received me very warmly and asked me about the situation in the country and the role of the Church. He revealed that the US ambassador had come to visit him, somewhat concerned that I was siding with the popular revolution, while the United States supported the Christian Democratic government.

I made it clear to the Cardinal that this was not a political option, but simply a matter of justice in resolving the problems of my people. He replied that he would not insist on this point because the Ambassador's visit was unofficial and that, in any case, the Church must act not to please the powers of the earth, but in accordance with its faith and conscience in the Gospel.

The Cardinal also expressed concern that the defense of human rights and the demands of the people should not compromise the Church and Christian sentiments in the face of ideologies. I told him, as I told the Holy Father yesterday, that this was also my concern: to preach social justice and the defense of human rights, but at the same time to warn the grassroots forces demanding justice against the danger of falling into alien ideologies.

I also explained to him that we couldn't talk about anti-communism without risking complicity in the injustices of the rich, who speak of anti-communism not to defend Christian principles, but rather to defend their materialistic interests. I noticed that the Cardinal was satisfied with our conversation and assured me that Ho also prayed a lot for El Salvador.

Another noteworthy aspect is how the Cardinal believed my perspective was correct: we must try to salvage what is healthy in the current government and combine it with what can be healthy in terms of popular efforts and support. He told me he believed this was the true solution to our crises.

Which confirmed me a lot in continuing to defend the healthy part of the Government and force it to do so.find a dialogue with the popular bases, who must also be warned of the danger of losing their Christian feelings for a temporary liberation.

Afterwards I went to the Congregation for Bishops, but Cardinal Baggio wasn't there because the Pope had invited him to the closing Mass of the Dutch Synod, and neither was the undersecretary, Monsignor Moreira, a Brazilian, whom I saw on the way out and who told me to come back shortly.

Me he gave the opportunity forI went to speak to the Congregation for Education and discussed the seminary issue. There I met the Undersecretary, and it was fortunate, because he is open-minded to developments that often scandalize the traditionalism of our Church. He told me, very confidentially, how much he feared this lack of openness in the Church.

He was pleased to find similar opinions in me, and we discussed the situation at the seminary at length. He promised to do everything possible to achieve the best possible outcome and that he would let me know. He urged me to be very courageous and to remember that anyone who follows this progressive line of a Church authentically faithful to the postulates of the Second Vatican Council must suffer greatly from being questioned, but that the knowledge and satisfaction of serving God and the Church are worth more than any persecution.

I then went to the Congregation for Bishops. Cardinal Baggio was not present, but I was assisted by Monsignor Moreira, who was very understanding. I was able to leave him the letter I had written to Cardinal Lorscheider, a summary of our discussions in San Salvador. I urged him in particular to resolve the question of the auxiliary bishop and to seriously consider the suggestion of revitalizing the Episcopal Conference with new elements, open to the Church's evolving mentalities.

He listened very attentively to all the problems I was able to explain, and I also left him the documents from the Episcopal Conference, which he promised to study and discuss with Monsignor Baggio, and to do everything in his power for him. Afterward, I went to pack my bags at the Pensionato Romano, had lunch, and then the Dominican nuns came to accompany us to the airport, bound for Belgium on Alitalia.

It was four in the afternoon, and our flight was a success. We arrived in Brussels, where Father Juan Deplanck Lencho and other Salvadoran and Belgian friends were waiting for us, giving us a warm welcome.

Father Juan said he had already scheduled a meeting in Bruges for that evening, and we set off, not worrying about dinner except for a small sandwich along the way.

Indeed, after about an hour's walk, we reached this picturesque town I'd only known at night. A large number of faithful had gathered in its parish hall, members of basic ecclesial communities, founded here by Father Pedro at the express request of Bishop Desmet, who was at the center of the meeting.

Father Rogelio, who is on vacation, led the meeting and introduced me. I was greeted with warm and unending applause.To greeted TheThe crowd felt a sense of communion. The joy of feeling at home, of greeting Monsignor Desmet, of thanking him for all his collaboration with our Church and with all the Belgians, who have given us such invaluable help in terms of personnel, financial support, and every kind of assistance for our pastoral work.

Afterward, there were further greetings and expressions of solidarity, and I was invited to develop a theme, which I chose as the theme of my honorary degree, "Faith and Politics": what faith can offer to political realities, drawing on my pastoral letter to highlight the services the Church offers in this time of crisis, starting first and foremost with its identity as a Church...

And on the second point, what faith receives in exchange for this service to the world is a mature faith in God, a deeper sense of sin, and a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ, his incarnation, and his redemption; there is a reciprocity between the good the Church does by illuminating politics and by deepening Christians' faith in their own reality.

After several greetings and receiving gifts from the priests' families, particularly from Father Pedro's mother, I went to the Episcopal Conference at the invitation of Bishop Desmet, where we spoke at length about the situation of Belgian priests in El

Salvador. We were especially concerned about Rogelio's situation, whom the Bishop himself appreciates but about whom he has reservations as much as I do. We shared our concerns and decided not to make him a victim, but rather to support him fraternally through dialogue, so that he could be a valuable asset in the pastoral care of our diocese.

We also discussed Father Esteban Alliet's situation, and I was very happy to be able to give him good news about the other priests and nuns in his diocese. Bishop Desmet told me what else he could do, that he had no reservations about helping us, that Divine Providence would help him, and that even if they were priests who wanted to go there, he would be happy to help them.would authorize.

I admired the generous spirit of a bishop who truly loves the universal Church and sees more than just the interests of his own diocese. It was already midnight. It was strange to leave Bruges at midnight and return to Leuven, where we were able to sleep a bit in the Latin American Formation House, run by the Belgian Fathers to train pastoral workers from Europe, and especially Belgium, for the Latin American dioceses.

A beautiful room awaited me and thus, with the beginning of a new day, the long journey I have tried to describe in this diary ended.

Friday, February 1, 1980.

After sleeping just four and a half hours, Father Juan Deplanck Lencho was already calling me to go celebrate Mass, have breakfast, and then leave to fulfill various commitments he had scheduled.

The first was at the Government Palace in Brussels, where we were received with great cordiality and attention by the Prime Minister, the country's highest practical authority. He asked us about the country's situation and the role of the Christian Democrats, since he belongs to that party, and I was able to frankly explain to him the reality of our political and ecclesiastical situation in that beloved country.

Then we headed to the press conference held at the University of Louvain. There were about 25 or more journalists, from print, television, and radio, with whom we shared nearly two hours of very interesting and intelligent conversation. We also asked questions about the situation in the country, the situation of the Church in Latin America, and the problems they see within the Church and in politics. I tried to remain within my pastoral role, while still responding to everyone.

Father Jesús Delgado helped me greatly, offering invaluable contributions to this dialogue, as did Father Juan Deplanck Lencho, especially for his translation into Flemish and French. After the meeting, we went to lunch at a pleasant restaurant in Leuven. After a short break, we returned to Brussels in the afternoon to visit the headquarters of the Christian Democratic Party, whose president welcomed us warmly and expressed deep concern for our situation and for the assistance Belgium could provide in our country's political situation.

The second visit was to the headquarters of the Central Union of Workers, the world authority of trade unions, where we deeply experienced the human warmth of a meeting that took place on concerns aboutWe were concerned about the plight of our workers and what could be done in this terrible crisis affecting our country's workers, farmers, and the poor. It was a very positive and deeply Christian conversation, in which

we shared many perspectives on the organization's ideology and the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, we went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to visit the Ministry of Development, where aid is provided to third world countries; we were received by the Undersecretary and he explained to us in detail that he could provide great help to our programs, since presentable through organizations with legal personality and who would approve everything that was in favor of our development.

The Undersecretary, who appears to be from a Latin American citizen, said that he knew Father Ramón Vega very well and this circumstance allowed me to offer it to him. We will take advantage of the offer.of help he has given us, since Father Vega has a lot of experience and is a friend of his, to present aid programs to meet the needs of our country.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when we returned to the Seminary, where the Rector was waiting for us, had a cordial dinner with us, and then accompanied us to his room to offer us drinks and crackers. We discussed, as brother priests, some of the problems faced by Belgian priests in El Salvador, promising us their warm and priestly assistance. How much can be accomplished when dialogue is conducted with a sense of fraternity, and so concluded another providential day of our European journey.

Saturday, February 2, 1980.

It was a day dedicated to Our Lady of Candelaria, filled with emotion and useful contacts and communications. I celebrated Holy Mass in the chapel of the Colegio

Latinoamericano with Father Juan Deplanck Lencho and, after breakfast, I donned the bishop's habit to attend the awarding ceremony of an honorary degree from the University of Louvain.

A procession with all the professors in their robes headed towards the University church, where a Gregorian Mass was sung. Holy Mass was celebrated very solemnly, with a homily in which great importance was given to the life of our archdiocesan Church. It was in flamenco, I didn't understand, but the very dear names of Aguilares, Jesús Jiménez, and Padre Rutilio Grande could be heard. I noted this, and it was later explained to me, as a very high compliment to the pastoral care of our diocese.

There were four honorary doctorates, but the accolades were directed primarily at me. Upon returning to the University, we prepared to enter the Aula Magna, packed with dignitaries. There was the Prime Minister; the Bishop of Bruges, Monsignor Desmet; all the professors, the four doctoral students, and a very select audience; and, above, a large group of students.

The Rector introduced the event and gave me the floor, as it was my turn to address the main theme, the political and faith dimensions. When I took the stage, the crowd greeted me with warm, almost interminable applause, which I naturally acknowledged.

I spoke a few words that had been prepared for me in Flamenco, to say that I was deeply saddened not to be able to speak their language, but that I would speak the language of my poor, whom I had come to represent. This gesture of effort to speak their language was greeted with another round of warm applause. And I began my thesis in Spanish, on the political dimension of faith, starting with the poor.

In short, this is what faith can do in the realm of politics, the work of our Archdiocese in engaging the country and, secondly, as our faith grows, the mysteries become deeper, based on these realities of politics, when we take into account the preferential option for the poor.

For forty minutes, I noticed extraordinary attention, because, although I spoke in Spanish, Father Juan had prepared a Flemish translation that everyone followed, and at the end, the applause was extraordinary. I was truly overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and welcome, especially from the young university students from Louvain, who encouraged the entire audience to continue applauding. The presentation of the doctoral robes followed, with each doctor reading their eulogy. A South African woman, a writer; a doctor, an engineer; and me.

I was also given a special welcome by the audience when my godfather, a very kind Monsignor whose name I don't remember today, gave a presentation about me and my life. It was promptly translated into Spanish for me, and it was a heartfelt eulogy. At the end of this eulogy, as they had done with the previous ones, the Rector presented me with the doctoral insignia, a symbol of the toga, which also received a standing ovation.

Finally, the doctor expressed his gratitude on behalf of all four. A very cordial and lively reception followed, with the entire community, during which I was able to greet numerous relatives of the priests and nuns who work in our diocese, as well as many acquaintances from Latin America. A true celebration of spirit and culture. We then moved to a typical university hall, where a shared lunch was served with all these dignitaries who had attended as members or guests of the University.

In particular, the greetings from all these people gave me great encouragement. They all told me it was a very timely message and that it had made many people reflect on the situation in our country and on the Christian and theological perspectives of our pastoral ministry.

Some theologians, who had reservations about liberation theology, stated that they had grasped many points they hadn't previously understood and that they believed that Latin America truly had its own theology, even though it was the theology of the Church. Many testimonies, especially from young people who felt drawn toward a faith more committed to earthly realities, etc., thanked God and the Virgin Mary for the encouragement and moral support I felt at this event.

It was already five in the afternoon when some Salvadorans were waiting for me in Father Juan's room. They wanted to share their concerns for our country. Afterward, we went to Brussels for a pre-arranged interview with Latin Americans, who number about five thousand in Belgium, many of them exiled, others students. There was a very cordial atmosphere, with questions and answers about Latin American problems, the Church, and especially El Salvador.

We were all very satisfied with this cordial conversation, and finally we went to dinner at the home of a Uruguayan, a dear friend of Father Juan, who lives with his wife and family in one of the university residences. Another couple and another friend accompanied us, with whom we had a very interesting conversation. And so this intense day ended around midnight. It's almost Sunday, February 3rd.

Sunday, February 3, 1980.

After celebrating Mass with Father Juan and Father Chus in the chapel of the Colegio de América Latina, and receiving several visitors, a woman from Germany who had come specifically to discuss how a German solidarity group for El Salvador could be of assistance, and an elderly couple, a priest and an elderly woman, who asked me to bring a donation to Father Rosa and the others who studied in Belgium so they could help in any way they wished, we left with Father Juan and Father Chus for the home of Father Juan Deplanck Lencho, in a city whose name I don't remember. There we had lunch and said goodbye to this large, close-knit family. We then headed to the Generalate of the Sisters of Saint Nicholas, in another city far to the south of Belgium, where all the families of the priests and nuns who work in our Archdiocese were gathered.

The warm welcome I received and the communion we shared were moving; first, in the chapel, where we read a Gospel passage on the mission of those sent by God to preach his Gospel, and a homily in which I tried to express the feelings that united us there and the memory of our loved ones, far away, who are the fruit of these united, welcoming, Christian families. We then shared a delicious snack, during which I had another opportunity to say goodbye and take photos of us as a group.

In short, it was an unforgettable afternoon, filled with heart and profound Christian spirit. I will share the memory of this afternoon with all the dear Belgian collaborators of our Archdiocese. It was quite late in the evening when we headed to Paris, where we have a busy day tomorrow. The journey was very picturesque, even though it was raining, but everything was new to me. Arriving in Paris was also the first time I'd seen this beautiful city, albeit briefly, but I already feel like I've seen it with my own eyes.

Monday, February 4, 1980.

We stayed in Paris with a community of Dominican Fathers, whose superior organized this very busy Monday in Paris. We celebrated Mass with the community, had breakfast, and then began work. First, we visited the Inodec offices., an information and solidarity service for the peoples of Latin America. We had a brief interview there.in what they were informed about the situation in El Salvador and the Church's relationship with this situation.

I expressed my gratitude for what I knew about this organization that supports our Salvadoran people. Then, accompanied by Father Jardines, a friendly young priest who speaks fluent French and Spanish, we went to visit the General Secretariat of the French Episcopal Conference.

The Father Secretary treated me with great cordiality, and I was able to speak with him at length, informing him of the situation in the country and our Church. With fraternal trust, I spoke to him about the division within our Episcopate and asked the French Episcopal Conference to take fraternal action regarding our episcopal problems in El Salvador. The Father collected written information and presented it to the president, Cardinal Etchegaray, Bishop of Marseille.

I had the good fortune and honor of speaking with the Cardinal President, who speaks Spanish and who sincerely regretted not being able to see me in person, but offered me his full cooperation and was truly happy to have me at the office of the French Episcopate.

We then had a conversation with Cardinal Marty, which was extremely pleasant, interesting, and effective. He won my trust with his fraternal welcome, and I spoke to him in depth about the problems of the Episcopate, the Nunciature, and my relations with the Holy See. He promised to help me in every way, being a dear friend of Cardinal Lorscheider and Cardinal Pironio, whom I told him I could consult to form a more impartial opinion on what I could tell him.

He expressed his strong agreement with the progressive ideas of our Archdiocese and with the problems of those who do not want to progress in this conciliar direction, and he told me that it was a problem for the entire Church, since we are all interested in not blocking the progress of the Second Vatican Council, and that there were many fundamentalist groups in the Church trying to manipulate the Pope's action in favor of a step back, which is false, since the Pope has always had a great love for the Council and its progress.

I felt a deep connection with the Cardinal's thinking and great hope in his promises to do something for our Salvadoran Church in its relations with the Holy See.

Then we went to lunch with a group from Justice and Peace and other organizations in solidarity with our Republic. It was a shared lunch with about fifteen people, who were very interested in asking questions. Please inform you about your situation in El Salvador and what they can do in solidarity with us. I found this interview very useful because it gives our people a lot of hope.

We then went to a meeting of Amnesty International, a small office where all this collaboration with countries in solidarity takes place, and we analyzed the situation of the

disappeared and what can be done to continue to insist on such a sensitive issue and on other forms of repression against our people.

We then went to a Catholic house, where we had a very interesting press conference. There were about forty journalists from major French newspapers, to whom I greeted them and explained the current situation in the country and the role the Church is playing. A very interesting conversation followed, in which they asked me about issues affecting the country and the Church, and where I had the opportunity to clarify my thoughts and thank them for spreading this message throughout the world with their wonderful media.

Father Jesús Delgado collaborated very well, translating and adding various concepts.

After this interview, we went to the Church of Sainte-Marie, where we celebrated an ecumenical event with a Protestant pastor, who had come especially from Marseille. I would have been waiting for me there too, had I had time, but he came with great chivalry and participated in the ecumenical celebration with me, leading a homily, both of us, to give the sense of an evangelical message to this tribute... We were recounting the afternoon in Paris.

It was already the evening service at St. Melrie Church, an ecumenical event presided over by a Protestant pastor and this servant. It was dedicated especially to the pastor and the Archdiocese of San Salvador. It included beautiful songs, a fitting Gospel reading, an opening comment from the pastor praising the Archbishop of San Salvador, and a message of mine in Spanish, which a young woman translated very poorly, and I felt I had lost much of what I wanted to say.

It was a summary of my speech at the University of Louvain, on what the Christian faith can offer in service to the world and how the Christian faith is enriched by receiving from the world the reflections of what it itself cultivates in the world. Those who understood Spanish, and they were almost all, thanked me at the end for the message, which seemed to have been well received. The names of Aguilares, Paisnal and all the people and places of our Archdiocese who have written pages of love for our Church.

I had the pleasure of greeting several Sisters of the Assumption from El Salvador, several exiles from Latin America, and many Salvadoran friends, with whom, after the ecumenical ceremony, we shared dinner at the Dominican Fathers' community. And late that night we returned to Louvain, arriving at two in the morning.

CHAPTER 27.

Year 1980.

Diary from February 5th to March 9th.

1980.

Tuesday, February 5, 1980.

I dedicated this day especially to sorting out several letters, messages, and other writings that, due to the turmoil of the previous days, had become confused. In particular,

together with Father Jesús Delgado, we organized the various financial contributions we received here for the needs of our Church.

I also wrote letters of thanks and apology to all the groups that had scheduled a meeting, but which, due to lack of time, we were unable to hold. I had to interrupt my trip, and the program originally planned by Father Juan could not be realized.

Around three in the afternoon, Father Jesús, Father Juan, and I called the radio station, where Monsignor Urioste, from El Salvador, interviewed us. We told him what had happened, my last moments in Rome, my doctorate at the University of Louvain, and the various meetings with groups in Belgium and France. For my part, I also highlighted the meeting with cardinals, bishops, and other figures who bring great hope to our Archdiocese.

There were also some visits and phone calls, which I handled with the utmost care. Around six in the evening, we were at the Brussels airport to begin the return flight. Father Rogelio was there with his family, as was Jaime Meléndez, who works in the Salvadoran diplomatic corps and is highly respected by several Salvadoran families. I left Father Jesús Delgado and Father Juan, and together with Father Rogelio, we took a flight to Madrid.

At nine o'clock in the evening in Madrid we agreed to take the Iberia flight, which leaves at one o'clock in the morning.

Wednesday, February 6, 1980.

This day, then, begins very early, at 1:00 a.m., with boarding the Iberia plane that will carry us through a very long night, heading west toward our America. The flight, in this endless night, is pleasant: comfortable seats, a movie playing, and, through headphones, classical music, reading, or sleeping.

And so we woke up, still very early, in Santo Domingo, where we made a short stop and then left for Panama, where we arrived at seven in the morning in America, that is, seven hours after arriving in Europe.

In Panama, I was able to telephone Archbishop McGrath. He invited me to greet the other bishops attending a meeting of Celam's Social Action Department, a gathering of several bishops from Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

There I had the opportunity to greet, in addition to Monsignor McGrath, Monsignor Rivera, Monsignor Flores, another Guatemalan bishop, another Mexican bishop, Monsignor Vega of Nicaragua, and several priests who carry out social action activities in various countries.

The president of this commission, representing Celam, is Monsignor Bambarén, whom I was unable to greet due to his absence. I would have loved to meet him, since he personally came to El Salvador to invite Monsignor Rivera to this meeting. I also learned of the pastoral work of Father Pedro Le Clair in Panama, who will soon return to El Salvador.

From Panama, after a short wait, we flew to Costa Rica, bound for Managua, where Padre Plácido, Piquín, and Paco boarded the plane. A problem made us wait longer than expected, two hours late, and we arrived in El Salvador at 4:00 PM, instead of the

scheduled 2:00 PM. I felt sorry for the people who were waiting for us and who welcomed us so warmly.

It is impressive to return to the country after a season in which, given the density of our history, there are many events and changes, which Father Urrutia, who came to visit me and other friends, began to talk about, while we were directing DiFrom the airport, forty-five minutes, to the Divine Providence Hospital. There I found a pile of correspondence. The joy of the nuns who welcomed me, the small initial comments.

How wonderful to be back home after a few days away! However, the worries have begun. I've already received several letters regarding my mediation in Mr. Dunn's kidnapping, as well as phone calls from the Spanish Embassy, occupied by the Popular Leagues on February 28th, and other calls indicating the need to remain here in your place until there's a real need for me to leave.

Thursday, February 7, 1980.

I spent most of the morning meeting with the Vicars General and the Chancellors, to learn about theCuria activities. At the same time, it also served to assess the political climate in which our Church finds itself. I am satisfied with the fidelity and diligence with which these closest collaborators have carried out the authority of the Diocese during my absence.

I received a phone call from the Spanish ambassador, who is being held hostage in the embassy itself, occupied by the Popular Leagues on February 28. I tried to encourage him and promised to go. a find him NelloAt the same time, the person in charge of the

employment, Mr. Argueta, spoke to me and told me that he was also interested in speaking to me personally to clarify some things, which, in the Ambassador's call, were able to have been confused about the internal situation of that embassy. I also promised to visit him.

I also called the Presidential Palace to greet Colonel Majano, who warmly congratulated me on the honor of my doctorate in Leuven and also commented on the media's re-examination of that news item and my radio interviews. He told me that during his administration, he had already noticed the abuse of news in our media, biased in favor of the oligarchy that controls them.

He told me he would come see me soon, and I told him I already knew what time he preferred, and that was when we could have lunch together.

The Italian ambassadors and the Spanish special ambassador came twice today to discuss the issue of the occupation of the Spanish embassy. They informed me of their mediation efforts with the Popular Leagues and the government. The situation is becoming difficult, either because there is little information about what the National Guard is doing during its military operations, or because the Ministry of Defense is unwilling to provide such clarifications.

For my part, I have offered to always intercede in any way possible, both with the Embassy and with grassroots organizations, even if not everything is at my disposal. However, I sense a respect that can be heard and used for the good of the lives of those suffering hostages.as hostages, in the Spanish embassy.

There have been requests for press interviews from foreign journalists in the country. Those from Argentina have called by phone, and those from Spain have also called. However, since I wasn't well informed about the situation during my absence, I thought it wiser to omit them and postpone them all until next Sunday, after Mass, when we will hold the usual press conference.

Friday, February 8, 1980.

At breakfast, I met with the Jesuit Provincial, Father Jerez, and the two Jesuits Ellacuría y Estrada-Father Fabián Amaya, Father Cristóbal Cortés, Father Rafael Urrutia, and Roberto Cuéllar, head of Legal Assistance-to analyze the country's political reality and the most appropriate approach for our Church.

It was a very frank and enriching meeting, in which we analyzed the current role played by the government, the Christian Democrats, grassroots political organizations, and, above all, the incessant reaction of the far right and its armed groups, which are causing so much damage and violence.

I have taken note so that, in the next homily, I can orient the situation of our Church in this way, which must always be a proclamation of the Kingdom of God, to promote all that is positive that can be found in this confusion of political and military activities, to also denounce the violation of human rights and to seek solutions that do not pass through the ways of violence, but rather by denouncing the different forms of violence and evaluating them.its proper measure, we can also make a judgment from the Kingdom of God, which is not political in nature nor does it support any specific political

project, but rather is an enlightenment of faith for justice based on our Christian faith and feelings.

I received a visit again from the Spanish and Italian ambassadors, somewhat disappointed that their meetings with the Supreme Government are being held up by a lack of information from the security forces. It is believed that the Popular Leagues' demands of February 28 regarding arrests and disappearances have not been clarified, and that the siege of the Embassy will continue until clearer information is provided.

They asked me to try to convince the Popular Leagues to leave the Embassy, and they also promised to continue working and to recognize the need for these unusual resources in a situation where so little importance is given to the human rights these organizations rightly demand. However, eight lives are at stake in the Ministry, even if they are not in danger from violence, but from hardship and deprivation of freedom.

I spent the afternoon organizing a large amount of correspondence during my absence and will collect notes that will be useful for the next homily.

Saturday, February 9, 1980.

The highlight of this day was the working dinner to gather information for my family. Father Fabián gave me an excellent summary of the three political projects at play in El Salvador: that of the government, that of the popular political groups, and that of the right. We focused on these three aspects of the various acts of violence, which have occurred in abundance this week, and on the possibilities for a solution without resorting to an armed insurrection, which would be terrible if it were to erupt in El Salvador.

I spent late into the night gathering these notes and got up very early to prepare the best way to present the country's situation and the role of the Church, drawing inspiration from this Sunday's readings, which speak to us precisely of the God of history who calls men and women to collaborate with him in shaping the history of every people.

Sunday, February 10, 1980.

At the Mass, which was held in the Basilica because the Cathedral was still occupied, I was warmly welcomed after my journey; I felt a special warmth in that church, which was quite crowded and became increasingly crowded as the Mass progressed. The homily lasted almost two hours, and this makes me feel like I'm abusing my time, but on the other hand, I feel the need to give direction to these people who are listening to me anxiously, because, precisely,me I extend SinceI don't notice any tiredness in the audience, they always notice that they are attentive and tell me that they follow me attentively even on the radio.

After the Mass, I had a press conference with foreign journalists, mostly from Latin America and Europe. There weren't many questions, as they themselves said everything had already been explained in the homily. However, it was a very cordial moment in which I felt very close to the journalists, and there were also many people gathered around this meeting, enjoying the dialogue, in which they too, ordinary people, intervened with interesting observations.

The homily was broadcast on a delay because the recordings were transferred to the device, as it is more difficult to broadcast live in the Basilica.

I went to lunch and spent the afternoon with the Sisters from the Hospital who came to the Oblates of Divine Love house, and with the Sisters from the College of the Holy Family, who also attended. We experienced a very pleasant family atmosphere, which strengthens our commitment to a Church that, in its difficult struggle, must also feel the tenderness of the love that God has chosen to give us as the tone of our work for the Kingdom.

Monday, February 11, 1980.

I went to celebrate the feast of the patron saint of the canton of Lourdes, in the parish of Colón. The church was packed, and the parish priest was warmly welcomed.

I preached on Our Lady of Lourdes, presenting her as a figure of the Church, and how what had happened in Lourdes, between Our Lady and Bernadette, was precisely the role of the Church in humanity: bringing people closer to God to pray, helping them see their mission, giving each person a commitment that God has placed in them and living it. Our Lady tells Bernadette what her mission is and how to carry forward the work of the Church, in communion with the pastors.

The Virgin asks Bernadette to tell the priests that she wants a temple there. We have solicited the following ideas:people to be docile to the Church and to build, in communion with their pastors, the Church that our Diocese wants to create, so that it may be the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Father Nicolás Menjívar, the parish priest, was very prompt and generous in reading to the faithful the reasons for the awarding of the honorary doctorate from Louvain and in asking for solidarity with the Bishop, which was expressed with warm applause. The same occurred at the end of the Mass, when I asked the faithful to express their sense of Church. I felt deeply encouraged by the expression of solidarity and communion experienced by these Catholics.

In the afternoon, I received a visit from the Nicaraguan ambassador, who, in addition to greeting me, invited me to visit his homeland to learn about the country's fascinating experiences. I expressed my desire to greet Bishop Obando and benefit from the knowledge he was offering me.

Dr. Jiménez, a former Venezuelan politician, also attended my Sunday Mass. He expressed his satisfaction with the Ministry, which, while remaining spiritual, is also guiding the country's politics to fulfill God's plan. He was very frank and shared with me some points on which he would like the Church to give a little more support to the Christian Democrats in their efforts to save the country.

I told him I agreed, but above all that I wanted to be faithful to my people and demand from democracy what the people demand and for which they have the opportunity today, especially to end the army's violent repression against our poor people.

An engineer also came to tell me that his office had been occupied by the Popular Leagues and asked me to mediate. I did so through the Legal Aid Office, since Mr. Cuéllar was going to negotiate and offered the Archbishopric for the deal.

Seminarian Miguel Rodríguez, whose family was the victim of this repression in the department of La Unión, also came. His mother is an example of Christian strength, but the torment his family is facing is profound. I offered him all the help of the Legal Aid Service and asked him to describe this abuse so I could report it, as is my duty.

That evening I visited the Chacón family and shared with them those familiar and human feelings, so necessary in these tense times.

Tuesday, February 12, 1980.

The morning began with a visit to the hospital by Engineer Villacorta, Undersecretary of Agriculture, who kindly presented me with the agricultural transformation project he had developed with his collaborators from the Ministry, illustrating some of the more difficult points and handing it over. Brought with the desire to listen to the opinion of the Church, especially on matters of Christian social doctrine.

I told him I would study it with the advisors, and we discussed at length how difficult this step will be, but how crucial it will be for the Christian Democrats to establish whether or not the Armed Forces want the necessary transformation of the country.

Later, at the Archbishop's Palace, Father Ernesto Rivas Gallont was waiting for me, along with the son of the former South African ambassador, Mr. Dunn, to discuss the proposal to be presented to the Liberation Forces regarding Mr. Dunn's kidnapping, currently under negotiation. I was told that in South Africa, private individuals were

making great efforts to raise a substantial sum to hand over to the kidnappers, but that they could not offer more.

Mr. Rivas Gallont and Mr. Dunn's son authorized me to tell Mr. Dunn's captors that there is an intense campaign underway in South Africa to raise funds to rescue Mr. Dunn, but that they could not offer more than what was offered.collector, as the family is personally poor and has no government support. Mr. Dunn's kidnappers will come in this week to seek me out, in my role as mediator in this painful story of the kidnapping.

There was much activity in the Archbishop's Palace, with visits from priests and lay people; meanwhile, in the meeting room, a discussion was taking place between employers and workers from one of the factories in conflict and on strike.

The Archbishopric hosts numerous negotiations, which honors its reputation for impartiality and justice.

The most important interview today was with Father Octavio Cruz, in his capacity as head of the Pastoral Commission. I was very satisfied with the information he provided me about the intense work this Pastoral Promoter is carrying out.

The main event was the short course for basic ecclesial communities at Domus Mariae and the preparation for another course for these communities in Brazil. There were also activities for the various seminary groups and other aspects of pastoral ministry. I was very interested in what Father Octavio told me about the spiritual and cultural development of priests, who perhaps feel very humanly deprived for having neglected their efforts to update themselves.

The interview with Dr. Mario Levy was also interesting. He commented on various aspects of the pastoral line contained in my pastoral letter and some of the illogicalities he finds in left-wing political groups. His letter is very interesting, and I began discussing it in the radio program we recorded this afternoon for tomorrow's interview.

We will specifically deal with the necessary organization among the people, but not precisely with membership in this or that organization, especially if the people do not like it, but rather with awakening the people's critical sense, so that they cease to be a mass and can become a people organized for the common good.

Rubén Zamora and another member of the Christian Democratic Party came to see me urgently to inform me of the most serious event of that day. A student demonstration celebrating their victory at the Ministry of Education was violently dispersed by right-wing elements, in collaboration with the army, who followed the defeat to the point of entering the Christian Democratic Party building, occupied by the Popular Leagues on February 28. A shootout broke out, resulting in several deaths and many injuries.

The Christian Democratic Commission approached me at the Seminary to request asylum for two women members of the Leagues who were occupying the Democratic League building and who had escaped under the pretext of being held hostage while making their way to freedom. One of these women saw her husband shot dead and is extremely nervous. We arranged for them to stay at the Holy Family College, since, as women, it was very difficult to accommodate you at the Seminary, which is already open.

That evening I received a visit from a journalist who asked me for an interview for an Argentine magazine, and we discussed at length the situation in the country, the role of the Church, and some of my personal information.

Wednesday, February 13, 1980.

I spoke at breakfast with Father Ramón Vega, whom I had invited to discuss matters relating to the Social Secretariat. He presented me with a series of problems, and I see that he is already making progress for the good of our diocese. He is succeeding in bringing together intellectuals who belonged to the university association, many of whom are now professionals, and their collaboration is expected from a Christian conscience. I told him that I would like to... visit those meetings and that I would always have the advice I so desperately need, to know how to give an ecclesial response to these culminating moments in our history.

Dr. Rubén Zamora arrived immediately to tell me about yesterday's bloody events, including the eviction of the Popular League squatters, who were holding several people hostage at the Christian Democratic Party headquarters. He also explained how this military operation, which resulted in so many casualties, was conducted against the wishes of the Board of Directors, which had expressly ordered the Ministry of Defense not to undertake any military action during the eviction.

He told me horrific things about what the security forces had done and that, since last night, they've been analyzing within the party what they should do. Of course, they should have demanded the resignation of the current Defense Minister and, as a party, put more pressure on the army, and some are even talking about withdrawing from the government. It's a very sensitive issue, but it's time to take measures that truly demonstrate they're trying to put an end to such cruel repression in the country.

Several audiences were granted at the Archbishopric, but in addition to the scheduled ones, several extraordinary visits were also held, in which I was able to participate as much as possible. The Vicars and Chancellors were very helpful in assisting the many people who flock to the Archbishopric during these critical political circumstances.

After lunch, I dedicated the afternoon to study and, in the evening, an interesting meeting with the Major Seminary, in which they confidently exposed their doubts and concerns to me and in a frank dialogue, I believe I tried to resolve them andThey were pleased to continue working on the formation of priests, just as the Church needs them right now. It was a pleasure to be surrounded by these twenty-one young theologians and philosophers, who are a true hope for our Church.

Thursday, February 14, 1980.

I had a brief conversation after breakfast with the Vicars General, Archbishop Urioste, returning from a short vacation, and Father Cortés, who informed me of some of the Curia's activities in my absence. We attempted to evaluate our work and noted a slight lack of communication, which led to some repetitive or conflicting instructions. Archbishop Urioste told me with fraternal frankness that my attitude often amounts to destroying some of the Vicars General's instructions and that this hinders the progress of authority.

I recognize that, but I insist once again that we need more communication, and that is why we have agreed that, every day, at eight o'clock, we are gathered forLet's see what

needs to be done together in the diocese. I found this brief and unexpected meeting very helpful.

I immediately went to the Domus Mariae, where Sister Maria met, as promised before my trip, with the priests considered the most advanced on the left. I had already had a very fruitful dialogue with them, and today's meeting was also an excellent way to bring us closer. It often seems like we're increasingly separated and facing greater dangers, when in reality there are genuine pastoral and priestly efforts.

At the same time, I took the opportunity to express my concerns and to demand that, amid the ups and downs of politics and our passion for grassroots political organizations, we truly be signs of the Kingdom of God, because that is why we are in the Church: to provide a transcendent presence amid the toils of the earth. They commented on this thought, according to the Gospel. I will continue to pray to God that they may be, as the Bishop of Bruges in Belgium told me, not enemies, not victims, but true collaborators.

An interesting meeting was held in the afternoon with representatives of popular organizations. One belonged to the UDN political party and another to the Popular Leagues of February 28. The other two, Fapu and the Popular Revolutionary Block, were unable to attend due to last-minute delays. minutes.

Perhaps because the burial of the victims of the previous day's repression was taking place at this very hour, this conversation, which I had on behalf of the Church with Father Moreno, Monsignor Urioste, and the two political representatives, was very fruitful. I had the opportunity to express my objections and highlight the Church's

responsibilities, defend the Christian sentiments of the people, and seek together, as true Salvadorans, the most peaceful and honorable solution to this crisis in the country.

We are committed to continuing our meetings and providing the Church with its services, without losing its identity as a Church. We ask, above all, that will hasten a government project that starts from the people and presents itself to the people to unite them in these organizations, and that, in this project, the Church can provide a double service, in those technical fields that are not within its competence, illuminating from the Gospel and judging the humanistic aspects according to evangelical criteria.

And on the other level, regarding religious and human aspects, for example, how religion and justice will be considered in this new project, the Church will be able to contribute all the richness of its doctrine, but at the same time it is clear that we will participate not as a political force, but as a Church, with the light of the Gospel. This relationship has seemed very positive to us, and it represents a new aspect in our relations with these organizations.

This evening, I had a brief, previously announced conversation with a representative of a clandestine organization with whom I am discussing the release of a hostage. At the same time, I am taking the opportunity to shed light on activities that often contradict Christian sentiments and the Gospel. I felt welcomed, and my message, through this representative, reached the entire organization, including its leaders.

Friday, February 15, 1980.

As promised, at eight o'clock this morning, I attended the meeting of those responsible for the diocesan Curia, to improve communication and create a more community-based government. This was the theme of our meeting today: to see what shortcomings we suffer from and how we can correct them. Some specific issues also emerged, which, when addressed together, are resolved in a much more intelligent and bearable way. After an intense visit, some already announced, others arriving unexpectedly.

A group of young people from Sonsonate came to ask me to go and bless them one clinic and celebrate mass for them, but I told them it was another diocese and that I was grateful Thank youDue to their kindness, I promised to visit them privately on another occasion; they insisted that I attend the inauguration they wanted, and I told them to ask the diocese for permission to do so, and they agreed to communicate.

This demonstrates the Church's wisdom in dividing its territory, as well as the people's sympathy, which I cannot scorn, but rather channel. There were several visits in the afternoon, even if unannounced, but given the immensity of the problems, occupations, hostages, and other similar cases, they must be addressed without delay.

Saturday, February 16, 1980.

Even though I wanted to dedicate this day entirely to preparing my Sunday sermon, I had to go to the Cathedral in the morning to fulfill my commitment to bless the image of Saint Raphael that will be taken to the canton of the same name in the parish of Candelaria de Cuscatlán. There, Father Interiano will receive it. But I did not want to

refuse this request from the humble peasants, because in them I always feel the presence and call of God.

Specifically, I had the opportunity to speak with those leading the occupation of the Cathedral. They are two young Christians belonging to a sector of the Popular Revolutionary Block, but they feel compelled to carry out these actions because they cannot find safety outside the Church. They are trying to shelter several peasants, many of them women and children, fleeing from the cantons in the Las Vueltas jurisdiction, in Chalatenango, where the National Guard and the Order are fiercely pursuing them. Others have had to flee to the mountains, and these have been able to take refuge in the Cathedral.

I told them I understood all this and that the Church was always open to this kind of hospitality, and that the occupation as they were operating was unnecessary. I suggested they contact the Block's leadership to discuss the occupation of the churches, since Lent is about to begin and people have a right to these places of worship. Through dialogue with the Church, they can find other ways to achieve the purposes for which they occupied the churches.

Last night, I also received a visit regarding a labor dispute involving two organizations, the Bpr and the Fapu. They are hindering each other, rather than helping each other, to the benefit of a factory that is closed but about to reopen. An occupation by the other organization has come to hinder this process. I will denounce this situation and call them to order in my homily tomorrow, God willing.

In the afternoon, I went to Guazapa. A very original event was held in the same parish convent where the Carmelite nuns reside. They have now changed their approach,

while maintaining the same religious purpose. They separated from their congregation, the Carmelites of St. Joseph, and five of them inaugurated a house there to serve the people with pastoral functions and continue to fulfill their religious duties, but without any connection to their former congregation.

Everything has been done in an orderly manner, and although this step may not be fully understood in the congregation, I have felt that the people have understood it very well, and that they, if they are faithful to their present purposes, can do much good, even in the aspect of religious life. Bringing him closer, making it very friendly in the city center.

I've been told that several young women already wish to join this group, but they intend to proceed with great caution, demanding everything the Gospel demands of religious life. We celebrated this very intimate Mass, together with the families of these new nuns and the community that collaborates in their pastoral ministry. It was an atmosphere of great understanding, prayer, and reflection; for me, too, it was an enrichment of the Spirit of the Lord.

I returned to prepare the homily, listening to the advice of those who would meet with me that day: Father Moreno, Doris Osegueda, Mr. Cuéllar, Father Cortés, and Father Urrutia. They gave me valuable insights into the reality of the week and how to illuminate it with the evangelical light of the Sunday homily. I stayed up until the early hours of the morning; it was already Sunday, February 17th.

Sunday, February 17, 1980.

The homily lasted an hour and forty-five minutes. I spoke about poverty using the framework of the Medellín document, presenting it as a denunciation of the world's injustice, as a spirit lived by trusting in God, and as a commitment-that of Jesus Christ, who commits himself to the poor, and from there the Church also carries out Christ's mission to call all to salvation.

And with this light of the Beatitudes, which were read today in the Gospel, I have illuminated the reality of the country to condemn the selfishness of wealth, which insists on maintaining its privileges, and also to provide guidance from the needs of the poor to the country's politics. It was much talked about because last night I was with the Jesuits.of the Ucato handled correspondence, and I found a very warm welcome, along with other lay visitors who had listened.

In the afternoon, at seven o'clock in the evening, or rather, I went to Santa Lucía, the parish under the jurisdiction of Ilopango, where the new parish priest, Father Luis Recinos, has taken office. He came from Nicaragua to continue his studies here and will provide us with this pastoral service, caring for the parish of Santa Lucía, since its previous parish priest, Father Astor Ruiz, was unable to enter the country and had to go to Nicaragua to take on other commitments.

Thus, an exchange of priests took place: one from Santa Lucía to Nicaragua, and one from there to Santa Lucía. It was also a very pastoral moment, engaging with the various commissions.pulling them plural for continuation,congratulating them because after a year of the priest's absence they were able to behave like a true Christian community.

Upon returning from this mass, I delivered the secret letter that the family of the kidnapped Mr. Dunn delivers to his captors through this secret route.

Monday, February 18, 1980.

In our regular meeting, held during the first hour of work, we analyzed several issues regarding priests and their role in parishes. We concluded that this was a study requiring further investigation, in consultation with the Presbyteral Senate and the Pastoral Commission. However, since this is a rather confidential matter, one or two members from each of these sectors will be selected to study the situation of our clergy in depth, with a view to placing them in the positions best suited to their individual qualifications.

Afterwards, we had a meeting with the Presbyteral Senate, which was very interesting because to face the issues such as the occupation of temples and the problem of violence in the country.

As regards the taking of the temples, there has been much discussion about the appropriateness of a document on what the Church already thinks so thatWe all thought the same way, but it was deemed more appropriate to intervene directly against those who provoke the occupations, and therefore, those priests who have the most contact with the organizations were charged with ensuring that the leaders of these groups reached an agreement by talking with me, to discuss how these occupations would no longer be carried out or, in case of extreme necessity, would always be carried out in agreement with the person in charge of the temples.

In the afternoon, another very important meeting was held at the Catholic University Center, with the Administrative Commission, the Vicars General, the administrator of the Curia, Engineer Galván, and the director of the center, Father Ramón Vega. The meeting was held to discuss whether the work could proceed, on the same site where Archbishop Chávez had planned to build the Archbishop's Palace and residence, or, as has recently been suggested, whether it would be preferable to build next to the San José de la Montaña Seminary.

This opinion prevailed and, after careful consideration and taking into account the premises previously designated for this purpose, it was agreed to build the Caritas warehouse there and also the construction of the church, which is a condition for this donation.

Father Ramón Vega will be responsible for requesting a grant from the relevant body to support both constructions. Regarding the construction of the Archbishop's Residence on the Seminary's land, the structure has been significantly reduced to a simpler size, and there is hope of obtaining funding from foreign institutions, combining the funds already available from the sale of the land that belonged to the Seminary during the Chávez era, earmarked for this project, from the Archbishop's Residence, and from the Archbishop's Residence.

That evening, Father Estrada and Father Ellacuría came to see me to tell me that the previous Sunday's homily had caused a stir in Rome and that the Jesuit Father General had informed the Provincial of Central America of the comment that was being made in the Secretariat of State itself.

That same evening, he spoke with Father Jerez, who was in Panama, so that, if necessary, he could travel to Rome to explain the situation and ensure that the words of the homily reflected the extremely difficult situation in El Salvador. In particular, the letter announced for the President of the United States, read in the homily and which seems to be the main reason for this comment, draws inspiration from the imminent danger posed by military aid to El Salvador and, above all, from the new concept of "particular war," which consists of murderously eliminating all the efforts of grassroots organizations under the pretext of communism or terrorism.

This war aims to destroy not only those directly responsible, but also their entire families, who, according to this view, are poisoned by these terrorist concepts and must be eliminated. The danger, therefore, is grave, and the letter seeks to urge the President of the United States not to facilitate military aid, which would cause grave harm to our people because it would attempt to eliminate and kill many lives.

Tuesday, February 19, 1980.

I was awakened by an urgent call from Sister Maria of the Domus Mariae, informing me of a bomb explosion in the Radio Ysax factory, which had been completely destroyed. I asked if there had been any personal injuries and was pleased to discover that only material damage had been repaired.

That same night and at the same time, around 11 p.m., another bomb exploded in the Uca library. This was clearly a far-right maneuver against the voice of the Church and the demands of social justice.

In the Archbishopric, many priests and lay people came to express their solidarity with the attack on our radio station and to offer, from the very beginning, their help to make them Presto.Archbishop Rivera also expressed his solidarity with me, since we had a bishops' meeting at the Nunciature at 11:30. None of my fellow bishops mentioned the issue of the radio station, nor did anyone mention my honorary doctorate, nor any circumstance of our Archdiocese, except to criticize, always as if I were deviating from my pastoral path.

The meeting was organized by the Nuncio at the request of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, which, on behalf of His Holiness, declared the election of the President of the Episcopal Conference invalid and called for a new election, but only after reflection and prayer.

The Nuncio discussed other matters and scheduled a meeting next March for a spiritual retreat in the morning and for the elections in the afternoon. The atmosphere of this meeting always seemed very cold and strange to me. I chose not to say a word, since everything I said was misinterpreted due to the ill will that undoubtedly exists among some brother bishops. Lunch was held at the Nunciature.

In the afternoon, I waited for the seminarians, because I had offered to dedicate every Tuesday to this interesting dialogue with the future priests. And I ended the day at the Godoy family's home, where they treated me to dinner with the affection this family always offers.

I also received visits from the Spanish ambassador, released from prison at the embassy, the Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, who came from Spain for this matter, and the Italian ambassador.

The three of us spoke amicably with all of them, expressing a strong sense of solidarity towards our Diocese and gratitude for their cooperation in addressing the issue of the occupation of the Embassy.

Wednesday, February 20, 1980.

It was an extremely busy day. The Archbishopric is increasingly crowded with people visiting, consulting, and meeting. There's a great deal of vitality, and I thank God for that. We had our Curia meeting with the Vicars and Chancellors. We discussed various issues with complete frankness, and I believe this meeting is becoming increasingly useful. I asked for greater punctuality and efficiency, and I entrusted Father Rafael with the responsibility of setting the agenda and ensuring the meeting always takes place, even if something is missing.

Between visits, I held a press conference around 11:30 a.m., attended by journalists from the United States, Switzerland, Germany, and France. It was an impromptu event, but it provided a rich array of questions and guidance from our Archdiocese. Marta Benavides, a very active ecumenical member, also came to offer her full support. I invited her to lend us this assistance in the field of social communications, which she greatly appreciated and has begun to do with great interest.

In the afternoon I went to spend some time with the seminarians of Santa Tecla, who are completing their preparatory year.

After expressing this year's goal and our hopes for them, we had a broad and frank conversation, inviting them to consider me a friend rather than an authority. A very cordial atmosphere was created, allowing them to express their hopes, the joy of being part of this new experience in the seminary, as well as their fears for the future.

But I promised them that what was begun with openness cannot be closed, but rather, taking into account their suggestions and constructive criticism, we will improve, together with them, the formation of future priests.

After dinner with them, I headed to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, where, in a well-attended solemnity, I celebrated the beginning of Lent and the imposition of ashes. I invited the people, representing the entire Archdiocese, to walk with the parish priest this pilgrimage of sanctification and austerity that leads us to Easter, to offer the country a renewed Church in its Lent, with new men and women who can be true, authentic liberators of the homeland. After Mass, there were still journalists interested in speaking, and it was also very interesting.

I amIt's nine o'clock in the evening, and when I get to the hospital, I have two serious commitments, one from Father Estrada, and one from Father Ellacuría, with a gentleman with expertise in banking who wants to present me with a project on Agrarian Transformation and the banking problem. I listened carefully, but said: these are technical aspects, and I only invite you to continue refining your ideals, so that later we will have the opportunity to compare them with other projects, especially grassroots ones, which is what's needed today, concrete projects. For this reason, I congratulated him and sent him my regards, and I wished him... it would always work.We enthusiastically welcome this type of collaboration to our people.

The other meeting was impromptu, organized by the National Coordination of Popular Organizations, which was supposed to meet with the young soldiers today but was unable to attend. Nevertheless, the contact with the leaders of the organizations was very fruitful. While we won't go into details, we agreed to meet with members of the Church tomorrow to discuss various aspects of the relationship between the Church and popular political organizations.

Thursday, February 21, 1980.

Today began after Mass with breakfast with Father Ramón Vega, to discuss matters relating to the Secretariat for Social Action and the problems with Caritas. A pastoral meeting followed at the Archbishop's residence. For me, this is the most important committee in the Diocese, as it helps me coordinate the various activities of the archdiocesan vicariate and provides new suggestions for our pastoral ministry.

Father Octavio Cruz, as Secretary General, is giving great impetus to this Secretariat, as is the layman Francisco Cuéllar. I was unable to attend the entire meeting because I had a 10:30 meeting with the United States representative, who, in the absence of the new Ambassador, is handling American affairs in El Salvador.

The main point of the conversation was a discussion of my letter, addressed last Sunday to President Carter of the United States. He first told me that the President had not received this letter, which had already been widely circulated around the world, and he tried to explain the letter's primary purpose, which was military aid to El Salvador.explaining to met hat Notit was about equipping the security forces with weapons, but about perfecting some elements that are missing in the army, and so on, and

other explanations, to which I then tried to respond by telling him that my letter was based on information and, conditionally, such information.

I made my comment to him and maintained my fears that military aid, even with the distinctions he explained to me, would always lead to greater repression of the people, since it is the same Minister of Defense who directs both sectors of the military institution and who, despite not being for the Armed Forces, could have determined this aid of five million, no less, to arm themselves more and repress the people more.

And, regarding North America's influence on the country's politics, I told him that aid to the government, which lacks popular support, would appear to the people as an imposition, and that what we would appreciate most was promoting the process the people are already carrying forward and not hindering it by imposing a path different from the one on which the people are constructing themselves as architects of their own destiny.

There were other issues and the most important thing was that the ambassador accepted the suggestion that this military aid, hopefully, will be conditional on the reforms, so often announced, begin to be implemented and that the repressive line, evidently prevalent in the current Government, is eliminated.

Another very important visit was that of Catholic Relief, which offered me assistance for any emergency that might arise in El Salvador and discussed other aspects of the collaboration between this North American institution and our archdiocesan Caritas.

In the afternoon, I went with Father Alliet to visit the nuns of Quezaltepeque and Father Roberto, all Belgian, to bring them greetings from Belgium on the occasion of my recent trip. I am very happy that these priests and nuns are doing so much good in a city so needy.

Unfortunately there is a schism there with Father Quinteros, who lives scandalously and continues to usurp the convent and the church.

But Father Roberto managed to focus the attention of parish life on the chapel of the College of the Dominican Sisters.

On our way back we also visited Sister Maria, head of the Domus Mariae, where I was able to personally witness the enormous damage caused by the bomb that destroyed the equipment of our radio station Radio Ysax, the Panamerican Voice.

I was returning from this trip around 4:30 PM to the Seminary, where a meeting with the National Coordinator of Popular Political Organizations had already been scheduled. Among the items on the agenda, we chose to discuss the occupation of the temples first. First, the organizations explained the reasons for their occupation.

The priests, particularly the parish priest of the Rosary Church and the parish priest of the Calvary Church, immediately highlighted the disadvantages of these occupations for the life of the parish. They then discussed ways to reach an agreement so that these occupations would not cause the damage they are causing and would have the full effectiveness that the organizations claim these tactics of pressure, advocacy, and denunciation have.

Another late-night meeting was with a member of the Fpl, a clandestine force much feared among us and responsible for several kidnappings. However, I managed to speak with them to express the Church's sentiments and thoughts and to make them understand that respect for the Christian sentiments of the majority of the population will be a prerequisite for enjoying the popularity they lack when they trample on those sentiments.

Friday, February 22, 1980.

On this feast of the Chair of St. Peter, we celebrate the third anniversary of my assumption of office as Archdiocese. The priests recalled this date and proposed celebrating it. I expressed my willingness to do so in a Eucharistic way, celebrating Mass with them at noon. And so this commemoration was organized, which evokes, above all, great responsibility and a strong sense of prayer. But before the Holy Mass, we spent a morning reflecting on the country's situation with a team of political analysts.

A professor from the University of California, along with the rector of the same university, Father Estrada, and priests Urioste, Fabián Amaya, Cortés, Urrutia, Father Moreno, and Bachelor Cuéllar, shared breakfast and discussed the topic at hand. The meeting was held in the dining room of the Divine Providence Hospital, although it was originally scheduled to take place at the Casa Santa Eugenia in Planes de Renderos.

The change was desired by Mr. Héctor Dada, a member of the Board of Directors, who wanted to be with us because he had a request from the Board of Directors itself. The topic was developed by the expert and discussed by everyone. The situation in El Salvador is pre-revolutionary, but it is rapidly moving toward a revolutionary phase. Mr.

Héctor Dada's message, on behalf of the Board of Directors, was to implore the Church to offer its valuable voice in calling for a truce with the left, a truce that would give the government the opportunity to implement its transformation plans.

The government's request was analyzed, stating that it was not the Church, but the people, who should negotiate this truce with the government, and that the government should seek popular support and not impose reforms, especially if the people realized that this was happening with the support of a foreign power like the United States.

For our part, we are fully committed to collaborating on transformations that benefit the people, but we cannot ignore the fact that the people and left-wing organizations cannot collaborate on a project that simultaneously harbors repressive elements. We demand that the healthy part of the government, such as the goodwill of the Christian Democrats, represented by Mr. Dada and Dr. Morales Erlich, promote this credibility among the people, eliminating all those repressive elements.

On the other hand, it was said that the truce should not be called for only by the left, but that the main source of violence these days is the right, which can be controlled by the government and prevented from provoking violence by the left. In short, a very important issue was discussed with the utmost frankness, a topic that, with this frankness of expression from everyone, occupied the entire morning.

At midday we headed to the Basilica for the celebration of the third anniversary of my Archbishopric.

The ceremony was very heartfelt and intimate. There were few people in attendance, but representatives of the various communities of the diocese were present.

A good number of priests and nuns celebrated with true fervor and affection. The homily was given by Father Cristóbal Cortés, who was generous with his praise, emphasizing in particular the teachings of the pastoral letters, which he analyzed. come the Thoughts from the Archbishop and the Pastoral Ministry of the Archdiocese. Afterward, we received warm greetings as we left the church. The seminarians from the various priestly formation groups represented a sign of joy and hope at this celebration.

In the afternoon, I visited the Belgian congregations of Cojutepeque and Santa Cruz Michapa. In the evening, I met with the secretary general of an anti-torture organization based in Milan, Italy, who conveyed his greetings and announced that this year the organization will focus its activities specifically on El Salvador.

The Passionist Provincial Father also visited me, along with Father Juan Macho. We shared reflections on the pastoral life of our Archdiocese, which were undoubtedly very encouraging. We addressed the seminarians and vocations in particular, as they have a group of Passionist students among us, and we wish them well, as they are the hope of the congregation. In this regard, we discussed whether the philosophical and theological formation their students are receiving at the University of Cajureco is sufficient.

I clearly expressed my thoughts by saying that he sends SecondFather Juan's judgment, which seems very sound to me, is to fill in what might be missing. However, it gave me an idea for our seminarians to seek a more independent formation, more in harmony with our Archdiocese, given that there are many complaints from them and the priests about the current formation in the Interdiocesan Seminary. We don't want to lose the interdiocesan, but we also want collaborators for the pastoral care of our Archdiocese.

Saturday, February 23, 1980.

This morning I went to the canton chair with buttons, from the parish of Colón, where we will celebrate a wedding ceremony prepared by local catechists. I am accompanied by an English television crew, who want to learn about our pastoral life in the rural area. They were very impressed and took numerous photographs for their report. The ceremony was very cordial, and at the end of the Mass, several young people and other local people expressed their solidarity with the Archdiocese.

In the afternoon, I went to fulfill an invitation extended to me by the young people of Sonzacate, a town near Sonsonate, although it doesn't belong to my diocese, but to Santa Ana. They had obtained permission from the bishop, which I confirmed when I met with Monsignor Barrera at the Nunciature, who told me there were no problems. There were several intentions not to go, to avoid this conflict and also because we are under death threat.

The Nuncio to Costa Rica warned me that the threat of a new one still exists and urged me to be careful. However, I felt a special commitment to these young people and went, and frankly, I received a very warm welcome: my absence would have caused great disappointment, and I tried to fulfill their aspirations. Then blessing, a clinic they founded on their own initiative. I believe that, even though it's outside my area, it's a Church and an encouragement to humanity's efforts.

On our return we had the consultative meeting that Father Moreno and Mr. Cuéllar usually give me on behalf of the Secretariat of Social Communications.

It's also been a rather contentious week, with much violence and much to denounce; just as there's much to encourage among our people in need.

Sunday, February 24, 1980.

Mass has always been held in the Basilica, even though the Cathedral is now empty. However, it has become very dirty and smelly, and it will take a long time to prepare it for worship after a month of occupation. The hardship caused by the occupations is severe, but we understand that our people need these refuges from the Church, given the terrible oppression we are experiencing.

The turnout for Mass was extraordinary, largely due to the fact that our radio station has been offline since Monday, when a bomb was planted there.refer toat the startIn response to this attack and the many expressions of solidarity, grief, and support that are pouring in, the audience applauded with great enthusiasm, and all of this gives us hope that our station will soon be rebuilt.

A representative of Radio Noticias del Continente Costa Rica offered the services of its 31-meter shortwave radio station to broadcast today's entire homily, recorded. If necessary, he offered to do so directly by telephone next Sunday. This gesture was also widely applauded.

I also announced, to the joy of the people, that the technicians of the Uca and other experts in this field offered their collaboration to build a radio station more powerful than the one just bombed. The people's refusal This gesture is evident and the support for our station has also become more evident.

After the Mass, a very eloquent press conference was held, as those present came from various parts of the world and were very interested in learning the Church's views on the current situation in the country, as well as the threat I denounced during the Mass. Furthermore, on behalf of those present at this press conference, several expressed their support for our diocese, our radio station, and the archbishop.

At noon, I concluded the meeting of senior seminarians, which has been taking place since last Friday in San José de la Montaña with the seminarians of our Archdiocese. Before Mass, we spoke with great trust, and the youthful enthusiasm of these future priests is admirable. We want to avoid dampening their enthusiasm in any way, but rather direct them toward a pastoral ministry aligned with the concerns of this Archdiocese, which feels young and enthusiastic.

In the afternoon, I had to decide whether to leave for Guatemala or cancel, as the Curia Fathers held a private meeting to discuss the risk of my leaving to celebrate the retreat in Guatemala, where the dangers are greater than in the country itself, and also because my presence here is very convenient in these times of conflict. In the end, I decided not to leave, and we were able to hold my retreat at the house of the Passionist Sisters in Planes de Renderos.

Monday, February 25, 1980.

At breakfast time, the Chalatenango Fathers arrived. They would accompany me to Guatemala to make the retreat at the Carmelite house in Juyú.

We were all eagerly awaiting this meeting in such a picturesque location, but the reasons given by the Curia officials, which we also discussed over the phone at this point, convinced the group to forgo the trip and spend it here with me, at the home of the Passionist Sisters, who, despite the improvisation of the organization, generously welcomed us. Around nine in the morning, we were already at the "Lourdes" country house, on the road to Planes de Renderos, a very picturesque place, to begin our retreat, coordinated by Father Fabián, where we will all participate in a very cordial and profound conversation.

This day was full of reflection, as we decided to do only one motivational activity in the morning and another in the afternoon, leaving as much time as possible for personal reflection, which we will then discuss at midday and in the late afternoon.

In the evening we also had another very rich conversation, more pastoral in nature, which we focused this evening on the pastoral visit, as they have conceived it in the Vicariate of Chalatenango, in three zones where there will be a Pro-Vicar to assist the Episcopal Vicar. In each zone we will have two days of work with the pastoral agents and, from there, the parish programs will be developed, which I will visit in the following quarter. Therefore, I believe we will have a pastoral visit of evaluation, planning and more technical preparation towards a joint pastoral care.

The Pastoral Commission will be responsible for perfecting this project so that it can be implemented during the next week of Pentecost.

Tuesday, February 26, 1980.

From today until Friday, February 29th, at noon, I spent a spiritual retreat at the Passionist Sisters' Lourdes estate, on the road to Planes de Renderos. These were days of deep reflection and very fraternal and intimate communion with the diocesan priests who serve in the Chalatenango Vicariate.

Father Fabián Amaya, Episcopal Vicar of this vicariate, guided us with two daily meditations, which we later reflected in the individual prayer and that we have collected in fraternal dialogues AIn the late morning and late afternoon, during the Eucharist and in the evening, we had a pastoral dialogue, which gave rise to numerous initiatives for the good of that vicariate and the Diocese in general.

A private meeting between grassroots political organizations and other political bodies was also held recently at the Archbishop's Curia to analyze the platform the organizations are promising as a Revolutionary Democratic Government. The Church offered its services, based on its expertise in the humanistic and Christian fields.

Furthermore, work has recently begun on the antenna of Radio Ysax, the transmission facility that was almost completely destroyed by the bomb, leaving us without a Catholic radio station. Father Pick, an American Jesuit who works at radio stations in Honduras and Panama, has been called in and is directing this work, along with Father Pedraz. Technicians from the Catholic University and Antel have also volunteered. With so much help and public support, we hope our station will soon be operational.

On Friday afternoon, after completing the exercises, I visited the Radio Ysax transmission facility and found Father Pick hard at work, like any other laborer, clearing away the ruins of the pump. He was also working with other builders, led by engineers

from the Ucaa, trying to rebuild the warehouse where the new transmitter will be temporarily installed, since the permanent location will be outside the city and we already have suitable land.

Wednesday, February 27, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Thursday, February 28, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Friday, February 29, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Saturday, March 1, 1980.

The highlight of the day was the priestly ordination of Jaime Paredes, a young deacon from a distinguished family in San Salvador. Trained in Mexico, he completed his

diaconate, largely in El Salvador, and is a priest of great promise. He currently leads the group of seminarians completing their introductory or preparatory year and will also work in other pastoral settings.

The ceremony was very suggestive in its simplicity, especially at the moment when hands were laid on him, since many priests participated in this consecration; the same goes for his address.the friends present, who looked on and greeted with deep affection.

The presence of the seminarians, our five, was moving. They wereThose present were present, and it seemed like a celebration for the young vocational candidates, who undoubtedly found great encouragement in Jaime's priestly ordination. After the Mass, there was a simple but very cordial reception, attended not only by the distinguished guests but also by the farmers from the Chalatenango communities.

Also, after the ceremony, I had a press interview with an American journalist, always interested in the understanding of this crisis that our country is experiencing and the role of the Church within it.

In the afternoon I celebrated the traditional Holy Hour on the first of theThis month, at the Hospital of Divine Providence, with a large turnout. I spoke about the following Sunday's Gospel, that of the Transfiguration of the Lord, which calls us to participate in the life of Christ and the Church, at a time when we Christians have a great mission to fulfill in our homeland.

Also today, I interviewed some agrarian reform specialists who support the United States here in El Salvador, but who promote the government's project, which enjoys little popularity and the support of the United States. However, in a situation like this, one

must be very cautious with this aid, which seeks to influence the people's genuine desire for an imposed project.

I was grateful and very interested in learning the details. They are true technical experts. But I mentioned these reservations so that the project, with all its financial support, would always take into account the feelings and desires of the people, and not simply prop up a government that, due to its repressive nature, is losing popularity every day.

In the evening we held a consultation meeting to prepare the next day's homily.

Sunday, March 2, 1980.

Second Sunday of Lent. Due to the lack of a radio station, many people flocked to the Basilica in person, which was more crowded than usual. However, Radio Noticias del Continente, from Costa Rica, broadcast the Mass on shortwave, particularly the homily, which I have since heard widely and clearly, not only in the country but also on shortwave, in Central America, throughout the Isthmus, and even on the continent.

I also learned that radio stations in Venezuela and Colombia had collaborated; this impressed me greatly, because for the first time, the voice of a homily from the Archbishop of San Salvador had transcended borders and been heard across the continent.

I took the opportunity to address the public, not only in my diocese, but also in Latin America, for which this Church works, according to very clear norms, which were given in Medellín and Puebla. After the Mass, an interesting press conference was held,

attended by about ten journalists, in addition to many of those present at the Mass, who are now accustomed to participating in this dialogue of clarifications, which often relate to points from the homily or other interests of the visiting newspapers. They were all foreign journalists.

That evening I went to the parish in the Lourdes neighborhood, where Father Mateo Quijada had prepared a group for confirmation. The church was packed with faithful. The welcome was extremely warm, and I had to announce that there had been a change in that parish and that the pastor, although very fond of him, as I had assumed, would have to move elsewhere. Meanwhile, there, next Sunday, we will inaugurate a community of Pauline Fathers that will help us work in that poor sector of our diocese. Meanwhile, the current parish priest, Father Mateo, will move to the canton of El Carmen, to the parish of Christ the Redeemer, where he will be registered as a cooperating vicar.

Monday, March 3, 1980.

After a week's absence, I returned to the Archbishopric today, where I began my work with the usual meeting with the Vicars and Chancellors. However, Archbishop Urioste was not present because he was somewhat ill, suffering from the condition that causes him so much suffering: circulatory problems and veins in his feet. We discussed, in particular, the fact that, because of my character flaws, they can sometimes cause resentment or division, but that I should not doubt the loyalty of these collaborators.

I agreed with them and told them that it had been one of the points of my examination in the spiritual exercise of last week and that I had the aim that, with their

help,we had tried to work more united, in greater communication, and that we are committed to each other we have correct those things that can hinder this very interesting community work.

As I proposed during the retreat, we will hold this meeting at the beginning of the day, in the home chapel, so that it may also be a moment of prayer and evangelical guidance for the work of guiding this Archdiocese.

We immediately attended the Senate meeting, scheduled for this morning, but some forgot about it, resulting in poor attendance. However, some very interesting topics were discussed, such as preparations for tomorrow's clergy meeting, where the new Presbyteral Senate will be elected.

Other points were also touched upon regarding the Church's mission in this highly politicized environment, where grassroots ecclesial communities run the risk of losing their identity and being perceived as more political than evangelical. I tried to clarify, to the best of my ability, the importance of the Church at this time, and the need to ignore the great political issue, the process of our people, because we must not risk remaining on the sidelines at such a historic moment, but that our presence will be a profound ecclesial identity. Other points were discussed in a very familiar and confidential atmosphere.

I had lunch with the Belgian Fathers, since Father Pedro Le Clair had come from Panama, and so I completed this first day of work with one of my main goals: to share more of my life, even privately, with the dear priests of the diocese. It was a very fraternal conversation in which I could have...I also want to express my concerns about the criticisms levelled at the Belgians' work, but treating them nearby is a very Christian job, but it deserves great attention from the parish priest of the diocese.

They also confessed to me that they'd been threatened over the phone and that they preferred not to sleep in the same place they live. I got them an offer: with some reservations, they could spend as many nights as they wanted in a school.

In the afternoon, Father Moreno and I studied a document that the Church and the two universities have decided to present on the country's situation. This document will serve as an invitation to the people to participate in deciding their own destiny and not to expect everything from political groups, but rather to benefit from these efforts at unity and openness emanating from grassroots organizations, so that the people too can criticize the current situation and seek the most appropriate paths, allowing them to work for their own future.

I expressed some reservations about the document and also asked for more time to study it with a group of priests during tomorrow's clergy meeting.

Gunfire rang out for nearly an hour last night. The People's Revolutionary Army attacked the National Guard barracks...

Tuesday, March 4, 1980.

Today, the first Tuesday of the month, was the clergy meeting. No nuns attended because the main purpose was the election of the new Presbyteral Senate for the next two years. Initially, a Lenten theme, presented by Father Juan Macho Merino, was discussed, followed by elections to elect representatives of the various sectors of the clergy to the Presbyteral Senate.

One young man, four rural worker priests, two diocesan priests from the urban sector, and two religious. The election was conducted very well, and in the end, we have a selection that is well-represented from these different sectors of the clergy. For my part, I will choose five more, and so on. We will complete theSenate, which will soon meet for its first session.

I also learned about the progress of the work at the Domus Mariae, both on the hut where the new Radio Ysax transmitter will be installed, and on the technical transmission work carried out by Father Pick, with the collaboration of the Antel and Uca technicians.

This afternoon, I met with the Americans working on the Agrarian Reform project. Father Juan Ramón Vega accompanied me. We discussed the project. They are determined to fully support it, and it is said that this bill will be presented to the Board of Directors tomorrow.

Our main difficulty is whether the Government Council will have the authority to overcome the two extremes, the right and the left, that are so fiercely opposing it. However, for my part, I have supported everything that was justified in this reform and have promised it my moral support, my prayers, and my hope that it will be implemented for the good of our people.

I was unable to attend the invitation extended to me by the parish ofSaint Anthonyin Colonia América, where today, in the chapel of the Andes, Bibles were distributed to the faithful of the catechumenal movement, which is enjoying notable success among us.

For my part, I also insisted to the priests that this consultative body, the Senate, did not intend to exhaust my intentions to engage in dialogue with each of them. I apologized for not being able to meet with them due to the many problems we face, but I always promised them my sincere goodwill and asked for their cooperation in opening channels for these personal dialogues.

Wednesday, March 5, 1980.

After breakfast, the Ecumenical Commission for Humanitarian Aid surprised everyone by announcing that they would meet with me at eight o'clock, something I was unaware of. However, I briefly expressed my concern about this disparity of energy with the various charitable commissions and that I would invite them to meet with the other sectors of Caritas and the Archbishop's Emergency Commission at four o'clock that afternoon to unify our efforts. I then discussed this with the members of the Curia during the meeting, who also shared this concern. However, the meeting cannot be held this afternoon because several members are unable to attend. We will postpone it to another occasion.

It seems there are elements that are disruptive or that want to take advantage of this activity, such as using the Archbishop's Palace for political purposes. I will be very careful and we will try to do so.true charity with the style of Church.

Meetings with the Vicars and Chancellors are always very useful; they delve into many aspects of the life of the Curia and the Diocese, and I believe it is essential to do so on a daily basis.

During the morning, numerous private audiences were announced, and at midday an interview with North American and European journalists was translated by Miss Marta Benavides, who works ecumenically in the Archbishopric, being Protestant, but who is rendering a good service to our Archdiocese.

Very late, the President's Information Secretary, Don Sigfrido Munés, came to see me at the Divine Providence Hospital to deliver an invitation to the Presidential Palace for tomorrow at eleven o'clock. He couldn't tell me why, which I told him was a bit absurd, since I couldn't go if I didn't know where I was going. However, from their conversation, I had deduced that it was about the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law, and that the other bishops, the entire Cabinet and the Government, and other people who might be interested in supporting the Government in this agrarian transformation effort had also been invited.

I expressed my ambiguities, of course, about the fact that it hadn't been a visit with a clear understanding of its purpose, and also that I had reservations about these social, economic, and political reforms when people are being massacred at the same time. While I know there's great goodwill in some sectors of the government, what prevails and offends people so much is this repressive nature; as long as it exists, the Church cannot have full confidence in the government.

In any case, I appreciated the invitation and wanted to maintain my personal friendship with him and the other members of the government, but on a purely personal level; as pastor of the Church, he would understand my reservations and the responsibility of my presence. However, I promised to analyze and reflect on the matter and decide according to my conscience. He told me he agreed and that, regardless of my

presence or absence, he would always feel reassured and that his friendship with me had lost nothing.

That evening, I attended a meeting of the Catholic intellectual movement, which is renewing Father Ramón Vega. There were about twelve professionals present, and we discussed the need for professionals to fully engage, with all their potential, in the process of personal growth and to bring a Christian conscience to the life of the nation.

There were doubts whether I should continue this organization.Or it wasn't worth it, but I encouraged them and told them that this work of the Church in the professional sector was indispensable. And that, for the pastors themselves, especially the Archbishop, it was a great support to have this group of intellectuals they could count on in times of doubt and dialogue.

I recently went to the Jesuit Fathers' house inLoudto consult with them on my decision whether or not to attend the meeting at the Presidential Palace. The criteria I had already expressed prevailed, and it was deemed more appropriate to send a representative, but not to attend in person. In next Sunday's homily, I would have expressed my opinion, approving and supporting what was good, as well as expressing my reservations, always in favor of the people.

Thursday, March 6, 1980.

At breakfast, I consulted with Archbishop Urioste about whether to accept the Presidential Palace's invitation today at 11:00 PM to sign the Agrarian Reform Law. He saw more clearly the positive aspect of supporting a cause that benefits the people, but he

also saw the negative aspect of a government immersed in a system of severe repression. And we concluded, as we did last night, that he would not go personally, but would send Father Cortés as his representative.

At 11:30, Colonel Majano solemnly promulgated the Agrarian Reform Law in a radio and television address from the Presidential Palace. A state of siege was immediately declared to prevent any disruption this measure might cause.

This afternoon I spoke with members of the February 28 Popular League and also with some members of the Fpl, and both dismissed the government measure as a reform that fails to address the fundamental transformation the country needs, but rather as a new way of addressing our unjust situation and making ourselves look good internationally, allowing for U.S. intervention.

In these rather in-depth analyses, we addressed many issues with Monsignor Urioste, who was present at the first meeting. These worker- and peasant-based politicians answered questions with great conviction, undoubtedly delving deeper into the true situation of our country. We pray that this imminent violence does not accelerate, as left-wing and popular political groups see no other way forward for the country's true transformation than...

Friday, March 7, 1980.

I spent the morningIn the "Aldeíta" Father Gabriel Rodríguez's house, where we have four fourth-year theology seminarians completing their year of diaconate. We had a very interesting meeting where they presented to me their plan for spiritual, pastoral, and

academic experiences. It will be a year in which these young men, interrupting their regular studies, will gain a wealth of experience and will not abandon their study habits, much less their spiritual formation.

I saw them very happy and the Father was also very optimistic. After the meeting, we went to celebrate the Eucharist in the Church of Aldeíta withA community that filled the small church with great affection, a very lively faith. It is known that Father Gabriel and, now, the four seminarians work intensely with this community.of faith.

Upon my return, I met with the Ecumenical Commission for Humanitarian Aid to clarify relations with Caritas and the Archdiocesan Emergency Committee. We do not want to multiply or complicate the work of charity, but rather coordinate all emerging efforts and initiatives to serve others. I believe that all this activity will provide a sense of true education in love to this community of the Archdiocese.

We will try to establish the Caritas warehouse, along with its office, in the same building as the University Center, and we will also try to ensure that the Archdiocesan Council of Caritas is fully involved in this coordinated charitable and charitable work.

In the evening, the Reverend Monsignor from Sweden arrived with the 1980 Peace Prize, which was awarded to me and will be presented next Sunday. We had a long conversation in which he explained to me what religious life is like in his country. The Lutheran Church is the official Church of the country, while all the others, including the Catholic Church, are called free Churches and have organized an Ecumenical Secretariat. It is this Church that chose me, together with the Church of the Archdiocese, to award the prize. The 1980 Peace Prize.

She told me that when she asked for the Ministry of Worship's consent, he seemed very pleased and said, "For Monsignor Romero and the Diocese of San Salvador, whatever they want from Sweden." He also stated that the Ambassador to El Salvador and Guatemala would be present at this tribute from his homeland.

He also told me that the Catholic Church, which is a very small part of Sweden, with a German bishop and many Latin American immigrants, was very happy with this election and had raised a collection to help the needy in this diocese, and that he brought this contribution, which represents so much sacrifice and so much love on the part of the Catholics of his country. Next Sunday we will have a ceremony during Mass to award this prize. It will also mean encouragement for the entire community.

I also had a conversation with an English journalist, with whom we discussed the country's situation and the Church's mission in this difficult time, when social and economic reforms appear to bring great benefits to the population, but could be a cover for the true repressive intentions that continue to be very cruel among our people.

I believe this is a very difficult time of discernment for the Church, but I count on the light of the Holy Spirit, which I hope will not fail me as I guide my ecclesial community. The Swedish reverend's translator also wanted to meet with me. He is Lutheran and works at the Swedish embassy in Guatemala. He will participate in next Sunday's ceremony.

Finally, a brief interview with Mr. Ernesto Rivas Gallont about Mr. Dunn's kidnapping, which seems to be getting complicated; obviously, fundraising in South Africa has been a failure, and it's not possible to offer a significant sum for Mr. Dunn's release.

He was summoned to Washington to speak with the South African ambassador and see how this serious problem could be addressed again. I promised, as a mediator, to do what I could. ButI find this situation quite difficult. May the Lord help us save this life and may the Church perform its ministry in the name of Jesus Christ to save Mr. Dunn's freedom.

Saturday, March 8, 1980.

At 10:30 a.m., I went to bless the church in the "El Salitre" corner of the parish of Tejutla. A little over an hour's walk away, at the crossroads, people were waiting to accompany me, despite the dust, to the chapel where Father Valerio and Father Gabriel Rodríguez, along with other seminarians, presided over a large group of people who were also waiting. I preached on the meaning of a church, a center of unity for the Christian family, an encounter with the Lord, and the meaning of life's transcendence.

After Mass, a very friendly conversation ensued, during which the parishioners asked several religious and practical questions, even offering some suggestions. They applauded loudly when I told them that our radio station could be broadcast the next day, but that if it wasn't, it was because there were serious difficulties to address, though it wasn't certain they would be resolved that day. However, if they wanted to listen, they could also broadcast the Costa Rican radio station, Radio Noticias del Continente. It would broadcast on cut.

I went to visit the elderly father of Felipe de Jesús Chacón, a catechist who died violently. He is considered a martyr for our faith there. These people are also very

friendly; they welcome us with great affection and strive to give, to share the little they have.

That evening, along with Father Ellacuría and Father Estrada, Monsignor Urioste, Doris Osegueda, Bachelor Cuéllar, and Father Rafael Urrutia, they consulted me for information on the next day's homily.

The family of the young Castellanos, murdered yesterday after approximately eight days of captivity, visited me to beg for their bodies to be present at the 8:00 a.m. Mass in the Basilica, as they were particularly interested in my celebrating the Mass for their eternal rest. In this gesture of kindness,I saw that wasIt is necessary to accept this request, even though we are aware of the festive atmosphere that is created in our masses, but, seen with a spirit of hope and prayer, it is not he who has denied that atmosphere to the sadness of this house.

At the last minute, they told me that Radio Ysax's new system couldn't be operational, and therefore it wouldn't be possible to broadcast the following day's Mass. I insisted they contact Radio Noticias del Continente in Costa Rica, which offered to provide this service during our absence from Radio Ysax.

On this day, the Cathedral was again occupied by the faithful for the burial of nine bodies, victims of this wave of repression we are experiencing. Other deceased will have their funerals elsewhere.

They asked me if I would celebrate the official Mass in the Cathedral. I replied that I wouldn't go because I had already booked the Basilica for Sunday Mass, given the uncertainty about capacity. And I asked them to notify the management.analyze, we will

evaluate these shots, taking into account the disadvantages that we have already highlighted in a previous dialogue.

He told me that he hadn't given any advance notice of the occupation because it had to be a quick move, as the Popular Revolutionary Block was going to take control to protest and they were in a hurry to do so so they could bury their bodies there that night.

Sunday, March 9, 1980.

I consider this an extraordinary Sunday and I thank God for the immense satisfaction he has given me today. Sunday Mass was extraordinary in the sense of two events that do not usually occur on other Sundays: first, the announcement of the award of the 1980 Peace Prize, presented to me by the Swedish Ecumenical Action. Unable to be there, they were kind enough to send the General Secretary, along with another member of the Lutheran Church, to make this solemn presentation to me in the Cathedral.

Mr. was also present. Ambassador DallaSweden. The monsignor who presented me with the award, a parchment containing a check for ten thousand dollars and a further check for a collection among Catholics in Sweden of two thousand five hundred dollars, spoke highly of the sentiments of those Christian Churches before presenting the prize.

The award was presented to me by the Ambassador himself, who officially expressed his country's solidarity with this gesture by his country's Ecumenical Action. The other event was the presence of two bodies recently massacred after being kidnapped.

They were found murdered, horribly tortured. They were the husband and wife of Roberto Castellanos, a young Danish woman. His mother was unable to attend, but Roberto's mother expressly requested to be present at this Mass, despite the atmosphere, which, as I had sensed, might perhaps offend her feelings of grief. She told me she had always admired that Mass and that her son was completely in agreement with everything...

He explained that this Sunday's Mass was extraordinary for two reasons: first, because after the Gospel, I was awarded the Peace Prize, presented by the Swedish Ecumenical Action, and second, because there were two bodies present, murdered by right-wing forces, whose husband's mother, since they were a married couple, wanted them solemnly exposed during the eight o'clock Mass in the Basilica.

She told me that her son Roberto, married to a young Danish woman who had been murdered with him, had worked hard to improve the situation in the country and greatly admired the attitude of our Church. She, too, felt drawn to this Mass and begged that her last prayers be recited here to guide him to the cemetery. For these two reasons, the Basilica was very large; the immense Basilica could not contain the crowd, most of whom remained in the streets.

My homily was motivated by these two circumstances, connecting to the message of God's Word regarding personal conversion as an indispensable condition for salvation. In my address, I also referred to the two issues that have characterized the country this week: the growing government repression of the people, especially of organizations, and, on the other hand, the two laws of Agrarian Reform and the nationalization of banks.

My thought was that they were good laws,but they were running the risk of being ineffective until we avoided repression and attempted to dialogue with the people's plans.

Who want to defend the Government's plans with such intransigence that they feel like enemies on a par with the right.left was unfair, because if the right sought these transformations, but they have not repressed their attacks, which aimed to destroy the organization of the people and the left, were not an opposition to projects that benefit the people; since the left, as popular organizations are known, does not present hostile projects, but can rather be highly convergent for the benefit of the people, and the government had to listen to these popular voices if it wanted to find traction and effectiveness for its projects.

The procession after Mass was very moving. We placed the two coffins at the head of the procession, along with the grieving family and the priests who concelebrated with me on behalf of the University of California (Uca), since the deceased was a student there. Loud, and to the representatives of Sweden and the entire community, who, at the time of leaving, expressed their condolences to the family and their congratulations to me.

Afterwards, we went to the Basilica's convent, where the Swedish mission had prepared a popular reception, with soft drinks and cookies for the faithful. At the same time, a very interesting press conference was held, attended by numerous television, radio, and La Prensa journalists from other countries. Father Ellacuría, rector of the Uca, also participated. He was also very insightful in his responses.

We ask you to convey abroad the true picture of our situation, which is very difficult to understand, because while reforms that benefit the people are being proposed, a repression is also being implemented that terribly offends the dignity of our people.

At noon, I headed to conclude the youth meeting at the San José de la Montaña Seminary. About 40 young people were assisted by the seminary's Youth Ministry Commission, and the Mass was very youthful, full of great promise for our Church. I greatly appreciated the moment of Communion, when almost all the young people were able to share in the Eucharist. I told them that a life of grace, always open to Communion, was a guarantee of God's blessings and pastoral success, and I invited them to collaborate with young people from across the diocese.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, I returned to the Basilica to celebrate the funeral of Dr. Mario Zamora, also murdered last week. I expressed my condolences to his family, to his father, his wife, and his other siblings and relatives. And, returning to the theme of the first reading, in which God expresses to Moses his will to liberate the people and offer them "a land flowing with milk and honey," I said that the merits of those who work in politics and for the liberation of the people are immortal when they labor with Christian hope in their hearts.

This "land flowing with milk and honey" is not found in this world, but as a utopia that traces paths beyond history, and this was the merit of Mario Zamora, since as a Christian he had worked for a more just and fraternal world in El Salvador.

Finally, at seven o'clock in the evening, I went to hand over possession of the parish of the Lourdes neighborhood to Father Juan Martínez, Paulino; his provincial, Father Chacón, will preside over the Eucharist with me and Father Juan Noi.Father Juan

will settle there with a group of Pauline theologians studying at the Seminary, who will share their pastoral experiences in that poor neighborhood.

The people were very welcoming, especially the nuns of La Asunción, who already work there and are eager to collaborate with the new parish priest. The same goes for the Sisters of Charity, who, since Paulino is the parish priest, were present and offered their help.

There is every hope of improving a pastoral ministry that FatherMateoQuijada, the parish priest, who is moving to another location in Colonia Escalón, in the canton of El Carmen, was unable to fully develop his sincerity along the lines of the Archbishopric because he harbored certain prejudices against the liberation of our people and always sought to preserve certain privileges, which cannot be coexisted with at this time, when the Gospel shows us its radical logic.

Father Mateo He wasn't present at this event, but last Sunday, as I mentioned, he attended the confirmation ceremony he had planned to say goodbye to his parish. During the ceremony, there were also some protests against the Church, undoubtedly from people dissatisfied with a pastoral approach that seeks to be more faithful to the demands of the Gospel.

CHAPTER 28.

Year 1980.

Diary from March 10th to 20th.

1980.

Monday, March 10, 1980.

I began my work with a press interview with a Chilean journalist who came specifically on behalf of the rectory. Out of solidarity, he was interested in meeting me and asking me some questions about my opinion of the Church in the country at the moment. Another interview on French television, also present yesterday during Mass in the Basilica. Also, a short questionnaire on the current situation in the country.

Afterward, I went to celebrate the funeral Mass for the nine bodies killed by military repression, which have been in the Cathedral since the day before yesterday. Other priests were also present, with whom we concelebrated this Eucharist. I took the opportunity to deliver the message of the homily: those bodies were a lesson in humanity's lofty destiny: eternity; a denunciation of the sin that reigns on earth to the point of killing in this way; and a word of encouragement for all those who continue to fight for the liberation of their people...

Then I went to attend a meeting of a group of priests, who meet every month at the Domus Mariae. They are the priests we could call progressives and with whom it is interesting to have these dialogues of mutual understanding.

In the afternoon, Father Ramiro came to tell me that a high-powered bomb had been found in the Basilica and that it had exploded yesterday, probably while he was

celebrating the five o'clock mass in suffrage for Dr. Mario Zamora and in what was there a lot of people.

The bomb was placed next to the altar of Santa Marta and was defused by expert police personnel, who stated that the potential of an explosion would have destroyed the entire Basilica and everyone inside. I thanked God for saving us from this new danger and for also saving this ancient temple, so beloved by the people of the capital.

I also went with Father Ramiro to the Church of the Rosary to greet the Dominican Fathers and to find out, in more detail, about the shooting they had been subjected to the previous night. According to the Fathers, the group that had taken refuge in the church was attacked by two bursts of machine gun fire. The first, likely from nearby buildings and perhaps from right-wing forces. The second, when the police appeared and fired at the church from the Freedom Monument.

I realized how terrible those bullets were, piercing the iron; they were peeling off walls and walls. Thank God, no personal injuries were reported, but there was a lot of damage to the Church. Perhaps, the Fathers said, about a hundred bullets broke stained glass windows, metal arches, walls, and other aspects of the temple.

At night, Mr. Arene visits me to discuss the crisis of the Christian Democrats and his resignation in depth. He joins other former Democrats, who are very intelligent but who, analyzing the situation, believe that the Christian Democrats should no longer participate in power because they serve as a shield for the terrible repression the government is waging against our people.

Mr. Arene has received death threats and is leaving for the United States, not only to avoid danger, but above all because an international investigation is urgently needed to objectively expose this situation, in which the presence of the Christian Democrats is protecting a situation that is genuinely one of popular repression. Finally, at the invitation of Monsignor Urioste, I had dinner with Dr. Delgado, the Monsignor's cousin, and Dr. Granillo, President of the Supreme Court of Justice.

The conversion focused on my homilies, and they criticized me for not having more decisively supported the Agrarian Reform project and the nationalization of the banks. I told them I had approved the good things, but at the same time I emphasized the great risks that render these laws ineffective until the terrible popular repression is eliminated. The people cannot believe or cooperate with a government that offers them reforms but, at the same time, offers them repression.

The discussion on other matters, especially my homilies, continued all evening, right up until the end of dinner. But we concluded by saying that the openness that prevails in this climate highlights the need for greater communication, also to gather information from other sectors that don't usually come into contact with us.

Already in my room, at eleven o'clock at night, I received a call from a Nicaraguan radio station requesting an interview about the country's current situation and my views on other issues affecting Nicaragua. Above all, I defended Christian sentiments in every revolutionary movement, ensuring that it was truly a service to the deeply religious people.

Tuesday, March 11, 1980.

The first news this morning is the bomb placed at the Sacerdotale Cooperative. I went to see it at noon and, thank God, it only destroyed the door and the merchandise near it, and even though it had been opened, the explosion...of the bomb, from one in the morning until five in the afternoon, when those responsible arrived, there were no further losses.

Yes, it was an attack for which we can't hazard an explanation, but it has some political implications, as it coincides with the appointment of Engineer Duarte as a member of the Board of Directors; the Engineer's brother is the former priest Alejandro Duarte, and this political figure is believed to be the same person. There may have been other causes, some say because he was a priest, but the first explanation is more likely.

After several months without one, we held a meeting of the Archbishop's Executive Council. It was MonsignorUrioste, Father Cortés, Father Brito, Engineer Galván, Attorney Mauricio Silva, and myself. This is a meeting we plan to hold every Tuesday from eight to nine o'clock to evaluate the functioning of our Archbishop's Curia.

Various issues were addressed, as will be reported in the minutes drawn up from time to time. I greatly appreciated the attention paid to improved communication between the various Curia staff and to improving service and order at the reception desk.

In the afternoon, I attended an audience with the Nuncio of Costa Rica, who came at the Holy Father's request to work for the unity of the Episcopate in El Salvador. He gave me a letter from the Cardinal Secretary of State requesting my cooperation in best

achieving this goal. We discussed various aspects of this disunity, and I explained my position within the Church.

He made several observations and I tried to convince him of my convictions, in conscience, but I noticed in him a certain caution towards my conduct.AlreadyEven though I explain to him the difficult environment in which we operate and the people's acceptance of this line, he maintains some fears that popular organizations are communist, and this aspect and this fear of communism are what influences some of his judgments.

I told him that I was very careful to avoid such infiltration and that this was one of my concerns, and that he shouldn't worry that my support for the popular organization meant sympathy for the left, much less ignorance of the danger of infiltration. Frankly, I know this, but I also see that anti-communism among us is often the weapon used by economic and political powers to further their social and political injustices.

I think the idea of my position has been clarified and accepted, of course, that in all those accidental things in which one can give in, I am willing to give in for the sake of peace, but never for my convictions of fidelity to the Gospel. Already the new lines of the Church already mine dear people.

Late one night I received a phone call from a Mexican newspaper asking me to discuss the situation in the country and the views of the Church.

Wednesday, March 12, 1980.

Today is the anniversary of Father Grande's death, and a meeting of bishops will be held in Ayagualo, convened by the Holy Father himself, to invite us to pray and seek our unity.

It coincided with the arrival of the Nuncio from Costa Rica, who had arrived on this very mission. The meeting took place in Ayagualo, at the Salesian retreat house, and began with the celebration of Holy Mass by the Nuncio and all the bishops.

During his homily, the Nuncio then made an exhortation which, after the Mass, he intended to concretize by inviting a dialogue in which the two opposing sectors of the Episcopal Conference could express themselves.

For my part, I expressed that it was my desire to be faithful to the Gospel.Church doctrine, which always becomes conflictual when it is approved, not only in theory, but also when it comes to living, and I also pointed out that these divisions already existed at the time of Monsignor Chávez and that they were always like a criticism of the Archdiocese, which tries to be faithful to these lines of the post-conciliar Church.

I also said that there was a lot of criticism of the Archbishopric and no living examples were being offered to imitate from other dioceses, and that what I was asking for was respect for the Archdiocese and that we have respected EveryoneIt has its own jurisdiction. Archbishop Rivera was also very intelligent in explaining this situation, having managed to trace, with more precise historical and doctrinal data, the origins of our Archdiocese after the Second Vatican Council.

The other interventions of the other bishops, naturally, went against the line of the Archbishopric and many superficial arguments were made, even if I recognize that there may be things in which I could be wrong and I am willing to correct them.

After lunch, this interesting meeting continued until four in the afternoon, when the vote for the re-election of the president and vice president took place. My appeal to unite to elect Monsignor Álvarez and thus ratify our election was accepted, but I was surprised that the same was not done with the vice president; on the contrary, Monsignor Rivera was removed from his post and Monsignor Aparicio was appointed vice president.

I am deeply concerned about this inconsistency in our resolutions for unity. Among other things, it was agreed to publish a joint statement on the situation in the country and, above all, a Lenten appeal, as a sign of our unity in the teaching and discipline of the Church.

Furthermore, when making statements that affect the entire Episcopate, consultations with other bishops should be taken into account. I understood that this was a personal matter for me, but I also said I accepted these conditions, provided they also take into account the statements that are often made in other dioceses with great imprudence and that also compromise the Church.

Everything has been very fruitful, although I fear, given the aggressiveness with which Bishop Aparicio and Bishop Álvarez have attacked me, that little has been gained in terms of profound feelings of unity. The Lord will decide, and for my part, I want to offer Him all these sacrifices and efforts so that the Gospel may prevail and we may all convert to the truth and to the service of God and our people.

I received a visit from Mrs. Gloria, from Dadahire, she came almost to console herself and thank me for my moral support for the Engineer after his resignation as a member of the Board of Directors. She clarified several things to me regarding the infidelities shown towards her husband by the Christian Democratic Party and the Board of Directors. And I told her she could rest easy, since she had obeyed her conscience and given proof of her fidelity.

Thursday, March 13, 1980.

In the meeting of the Curia we outlined the personnel of the Senate and the vicariates, the Vicars of the various vicariates of the Diocese, and we agreed to make some observations, a document, in which we express our hope of renewal, just as people have been renewed.

This morning there were several visits, but the main one was that of the Independent Professionals Movement, an organization that already has one hundred and fifty members, including professionals and technicians, who believe they have found their place in the popular process and that, without becoming partisan Politically,In a certain sense, they want to be a center of enlightenment and promotion for the country's entire political landscape. We spoke at length, and I saw many similarities between the Church's thinking and theirs.

We have thus ended up offering our services to each other, both those of the Church in a pastoral sense, and theirs in a professional and technical sense.

The Nuncio of Costa Rica came at noon to see, on site, the situation of our Archbishopric and the Seminary of San José de La Montaña. We tried to show him that there was no interference as the bishops accuse, but one can always see in the Nuncio a predisposition which, without a doubt, was the task entrusted to him.

Hence his insistence that we try, as soon as possible, to complete our archiepiscopal office and vacate the entire building for the seminary, a position I have maintained for a long time, except that, financially, we lack the means. But, with God's help-and I made this clear to the Nuncio-at that moment Engineer Galván appeared, who is a witness to our efforts in this regard.

He came to lunch with me at the hospital, where, after lunch with the nuns, we shared with him more intimately his latest recommendations, always in the sense that I am largely responsible for the disunity among the bishops, despite my suggestions to remind him of yesterday's meeting, and that he had to admit that there was a lot of passion, especially between Archbishop Álvarez and Archbishop Aparicio.

However, acknowledging this passion and this personal aspect of myself, he insists that I must give in as much as possible, which is also my thought, but not in substance when it comes to being faithful to the Gospel, to the doctrine of the Church and, above all, to these patient people who struggle to understand.

After siesta, I went out with Father Alliet to visit the Belgian community of nuns in Santiago Texacuangos. We spent a very cordial and happy time with that community because they work so hard, especially in healthcare. They are experts in nursing and have almost a hospital, so to speak, offering highly competent healthcare in what was once a convent and which today, we can say, is a very well-equipped health center.

Upon our return, we spoke with journalists from Italy, Venezuela, and North America. It was a rather in-depth interview on the Church's thinking, particularly on the issue of violence and the country's reforms.

Doña Inge de Gavidia also came on behalf of Caritas, and we had dinner together to discuss this topic, which interests me very much because it concerns the organization of the archdiocese's charitable work.

At half past seven in the evening we had the meeting with the Minor Seminary, which was very friendly, after I expressed to them that our relationships as bishop and seminarians must be based on faith and a very supernatural sense of obedience and understanding.

Many questions arose, and we had an interesting discussion about vocations, including the origins of our own. I began by sharing my own, and they also felt confident in sharing where the Lord had called them. I asked them to share a personal story, as no two vocations are the same, and this would serve as mutual edification.

Around 9:30 PM, I left to visit the Jesuits: Father Ellacuría, Father Jerez, who had just returned from Rome, and Father Jon Sobrino, also returning from the Congress of Third World Theologians in Brazil. They all told me very positive things about their relationships during the trip and about the security that supports my pastoral work.

It's admirable how in other countries this work of such great sacrifice is so lovingly understood, while inwardly my brother bishops seem so incomprehensible about this work, which sincerely aims to be a service to God and the Gospel. I ask the Holy Spirit to

guide me along the paths of truth and never let me be guided by politeness or the fear of offending anyone except Our Lord!

Friday, March 14, 1980.

I began this day with a working breakfast with the Curia Fathers. We finished examining the appointments of the Vicars, as there will be a pastoral meeting next Monday and the new professional Vicars.Vicars. We are preparing an exhortation to ensure that this staff renewal also signifies a renewal of spirit and a desire to work to build our Archdiocese well.

They have also developed a document that they would like the archdiocese, along with universities and other institutions independent of politics, to sign to sanction the terrible repression and pronounce a favorable judgment on the ongoing agrarian reform and other reforms.

Father Cortés, Father Fabián, and the others present were charged with carrying out this task, since Monsignor Urioste and I went at nine in the morning to visit the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador, who wished to be heard. Father Estrada was also present, and we had a very interesting conversation.

He presents himself as more than a diplomat, a man with a profound respect for human rights and extensive political experience. He wants to be a faithful contributor to the progress of our people, recognizes the mistakes his country has made in these Latin American countries, and is willing to work to change the face of North America.

We trusted each other enough to express our fears, the shortcomings we saw, and, above all, our desire to defend the poor from such repression and injustice. He also gave me the response letter I had sent to the President of the United States, asking him not to send military aid, as such aid would only further repress our people. He also asked him to be very cautious about political intervention, even though we needed his help as a more developed country than ours. The letter had also been written by the US Secretary of State and was accompanied by a Spanish translation, which we analyzed.

After this meeting, I visited the University Center site, where Archbishop Chávez had planned to build the Archbishop's Palace and his episcopal residence, but which, given the current high cost of living, seems impossible to realize. Together with architects Morales, Jovel, and Father Vega, we explored the possibility of building a house for the advancement of the clergy there.

That is, a priestly residence where our priests can take courses to renew their lives, and where there would also be rooms for priests and bishops who pass through San Salvador and sometimes don't have a church to stay in. But, above all, for the work of priestly renewal, along with a chapel, which is a condition of the donation of this property, and which will serve university ministry, the original purpose of the existing building, the Catholic University Center.

I thanked the Lord for this project, which was welcomed with great enthusiasm also by those who shared this reflection. It will be commissioned to carry out projects and ask for help even abroad.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, an important meeting of the Federation of Catholic Educational Centers was held at the Salvadoran high school. The meeting

included the presentation of a project for schools in pastoral care. I praised this effort to give a pastoral dimension to the school, which, in coordination with the parish priest and the diocesan ministry, becomes a true training center for pastoral workers, Christians who live in solidarity with their Church, trained to be a Church at the service of the transformation of our people. Therefore, it was necessary to leave any such activity outside of pastoral care and fully integrate as forces of the Church into the pastoral and evangelization work of the Archdiocese.

There was a very interesting dialogue, and the conclusion was that the federation would be incorporated, through a representative, into the Archdiocesan Pastoral Commission, and that each Catholic center would seek to form its own true Catholic education community, a community that is a true Church, open to the Archdiocese and the universal Church, with students, teachers, parents, other administrative staff, alumni, and so on. This means that each school will be surrounded by a large human and ecclesial community.

In the evening, I had an interview with the Italian Ambassador, who commented very critically on the situation of the Christian Democrats and promised to arrange an interview with representatives of the Christian Democrats so that, as a pastor, I could share with them the Church's thinking and its responsibility in politics.

Finally, we had dinner with Colonel Majano and Dr. Morales Erlich, members of the Governing Council; Monsignor Urioste and Father Estrada of the Revolutionary Government Junta. During dinner, we discussed primarily the progress of the Agrarian Reform in various sectors of the country.

They have great hope and genuine joy at having taken such a bold step, for which I congratulated them, but I took the opportunity to emphasize the risks, dangers, and doubts that also inspire my criticisms, expressed with great warmth by all the participants at this dinner. It was a very cordial dinner and, I believe, very constructive for the good of the country. I primarily emphasized the shortcomings and dangers of the Agrarian Reform, linked to this visible wave of violent repression by the security forces, which has significantly weakened the credibility of the Agrarian Reform and its lack of support among the population.

Second, why not secure greater popular support by seeking dialogue with popular forces, which would not all be considered left-wing or communist, but rather with a desire to discover the people's true interests and their demands for justice.

That the far right was not the same, that it was not working for these demands, but to maintain its privileges. And the third aspect he criticized was the appearance of VeryObedient to the will of the United States, they agreed that aid would be received, but that efforts would be made to significantly promote our country's autonomy. They accepted all these points of view and stated that they were among their greatest concerns and that they asked me to help them establish that dialogue with the population.

And I also spoke to them, in this regard, about the collaboration that the movement of recently formed professionals and technicians can offer, a movement they were unaware of and which they viewed with great hope. I thanked God for having experienced a day so rich in relationships that can benefit our Church and our people.

Saturday, March 15, 1980.

I had breakfast with Father Jesús Delgado, who usually comes on Saturdays, and took the opportunity to discuss the priestly renewal project. I invited him to speak with Father Vega and develop a construction project for the Archbishop's residence, which cannot be built due to the high cost of living, which our archdiocesan economy is currently unable to support. On the other hand, a house for studies and residence, and accommodation for priests, would have played a significant role there.

Father Jesús Delgado has also added a small hospital for sick priests, as it is located right on the hospital grounds. It seems to me that God's hand is pointing in this direction, something I have long desired. A home to better serve our beloved priests in their healing, their health, their rest, and their friendship.

With Father Gesù we also went to the Domus Mariae to see the work of the radio station.To be We met Father Pick and the engineer who is carrying out this work in collaboration with the Father.

"We can broadcast right away," they told me, "but it would be a good idea to secure part of the building so that this expensive transmitter is a little more protected." However, they will see the opportunity to get it up and running immediately for tomorrow's homily. I'm in no rush, but I'll let God show us His signs. It will certainly be a great service, since the new system promises to have greater power and the radio will be heard better, even in this temporary form, since the new system and antenna will be built on the new land that is already being prepared.

That evening, Father Astor Ruiz, who currently works in Nicaragua, came to see me and is trying to sort out his situation. He's considering whether it's best to return immediately or stay there while the storm passes and he prepares himself to serve better. I didn't have time for such an in-depth discussion, so I told him that...us we'll talk better in the following days, because during dinner I was busy with Father Ellacuría, Father Estrada, Father Rafael and the girl Doris Osegueda and the Bachelor Cuéllar, preparing the reports for my homily.

Sunday, March 16, 1980.

It was a day of intense pastoral work and great satisfaction. Mass in the Basilica lasted until 10:15. I realize I overdid my sermon, but the topics, the approaches to such a complex reality, and the people's attention encourage me to continue to use this attention to further publicize Lenten catechesis, the reflection on the mystery of Christ that we prepare for Holy Week, and also to offer Christian criteria for approaching the very complex realities of our country.

Today I highlighted the repression, which continues unabated but is intensifying, causing great pain and which the Church cannot fail to denounce.

I also referred to the agrarian reform process, which is underway and which the Church approves, but which I would like not to be accompanied by this tinge of repression, which makes the process almost unbelievable to a people who feel severely affected by the government itself.

I also referred to the state of siege, the strike being prepared for tomorrow, a general strike, and I said that its objective, which was to draw attention to the repression, is legitimate, but that we must be very careful not to degenerate into a new tragedy of the very repression we are trying to denounce. Other aspects of the Church, a very busy life this week, and of civil life.

We then traveled to Aguilares, where at 11:30 we celebrated Mass for the repose of Father Grande's soul, on the third anniversary of his death. The Jesuit provincial was present, along with a large number of Jesuits, perhaps almost all of them, along with priests from other congregations and other diocesan clergy. We were an impressive number for this celebration. However, I noticed a notable absence from the town of Aguilares, as the church was half full, and it was clear that most of them were from communities that had traveled from other places.

This indicates that the objectives of the military repression in hard-hit areas are being achieved: to terrorize the population and alienate those who could promote it in their consciousness and organization.

I took the opportunity to preach precisely on this, taking advantage of the biblical reading that speaks to us of "Christ, reconciliation of the world through his death and his blood", that the mystery of our Church asks for sacrifice as it asked the Great Father and that we we are make an effort toA total liberation of our people, without fear of the circumstances. It's difficult to live in this region. Father and the nuns told me that many people have even left the city and the surrounding cantons.

We then traveled to Tejutla, in the canton of Los Martínez, where they celebrated the patronal feast of San Salvador de Horta. He is a Franciscan saint, as the parish is run

by Franciscan priests. I took the opportunity to preach to them how the saint should be the man of the day and that imitation should not be literal, but spiritual, to be people of our time, in these difficult times we are experiencing.

After Mass, I gave the opportunity for dialogue and noticed that there were complaints among the people that Father Valerio, a Franciscan, is very zealous and hardworking, but he wants to impose a line that people no longer fully accept and that they would like to follow the line of the Archdiocese, which speaks of basic ecclesial communities.

It's clear that the Father is afraid of these communities, and I've tried to foster that trust and understand the people's complaints, but always keeping it in line with the Church's hierarchical sense. Fortunately, two of the seminarians who are preparing for the diaconate in that region were with me, and I noticed that they are quite experienced in this matter. They helped me clarify the situation, and I asked them to continue working according to the Archdiocesan guidelines, which require these communities in all parishes.

I understand that the Father, being a stranger and not understanding the situation and our pastoral work, has these reservations; we must understand him, but we must also encourage him not to dampen the spirit that is so strong among the people.

That evening, the Dominican Fathers were waiting for me at the hospital. One of them, the Vicar of a certain area of Madrid, is very interested in learning about our pastoral approach and helping us spread our ideas, which are widely accepted in this part of Spain. From there, he wants to spread them to countries in Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

This is therefore a valuable information service, to which we pay close attention. Father Luis Burguet, also a Dominican and present, will be responsible for implementing the Spanish initiative.

Monday, March 17, 1980.

I was told that there were several gunshots near the National University office last night.This I sleptI was deeply shocked and couldn't hear anything. However, as the day progressed, reports began to trickle in that security forces were surrounding the University and that there was a barrage of bullets, obviously much more powerful than the security forces'. Calls for intervention began to come in, both from within the University and from civilians surrounding the area.

The Rector and other members of the University even went to the Archbishop's Palace to request this intervention. They were joined by Father Cortés, who went to the Presidential Palace to speak with Colonel Majano and ask him to order the end to this repression, which was causing so much terror in that sector. The Colonel promised, after providing some explanations of the situation, to order the withdrawal of the troops, something which, as it later turned out, was beyond the control of the Junta itself.

However, in the afternoon this situation still continued and around four in the afternoon I spoke late personally with Colonel Majano, who also promised to order the withdrawal. A few minutes later, another member of the Board of Directors, Dr. Morales Erlich, informed me that the military operation had already been withdrawn.

I spent the entire day meeting with the Pastoral Commission at the "María Eugenia" house of the Sisters of the Assumption in Planes de Renderos, along with the new Vicars, who were unable to attend due to today's violent situation. The National Mass Coordinator had called a general strike for today, which has caused unrest in several parts of the country.

News is coming in from Colonia Santa Lucía, the San Jacinto neighborhood, and other areas of the capital. Our school year is proceeding smoothly.I had the opportunity to say what I expect from the Pastoral Commission: coordination that achieves harmony between the two sectors in which our pastoral workers operate.

Some are unwilling to commit themselves to the pastoral ministry of the Archdiocese, while others perhaps go too far, thus generating distrust among those present. This issue is being seriously reflected upon. Father Octavio Cruz, who is coordinating the meeting, offers a valuable analysis of the Archdiocese's pastoral plan, drawing on the documents that have guided it, such as the Pastoral Week, the Pastoral Letters, and the Puebla Document.

This is a concrete, well-defined line, strongly supported by the will of the Church, which makes the excuses of those who refuse to embrace this vision unacceptable. It will be the task of the Pastoral Commission to give our Archdiocese its own character. The meeting concluded with the Eucharist at 6:00 PM, a very intimate and well-attended service.

Meanwhile, reports are arriving of other acts of violence, such as the one that occurred in Hacienda Colima, where 23 deaths were recorded, and in other places where violent demonstrations have occurred.

The day concluded with a visit from the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Planning, and two other members of the government. They spoke to me about the progress of the Agrarian Reform process, how eager they are to find a solution to the country's problems, and how they complain of being contradicted both by the right, which rejects change, and by the hasty and provocative left. They also, and more importantly, have been contradicted by sectors within the government itself and by those who should have collaborated on the changes. Among these, personal ambitions and interests are already evident, ruining any hope of reform. They ask me, in my capacity as pastor, to denounce this corruption and selfishness and to request, to the best of my ability, a truce so that these reforms, which will benefit the people, can be implemented peacefully.

We discussed the situation at length, and I noticed a great openness and a desire to succeed, not for personal glory, but for the good of people.

After this visit, Father Astor Ruiz, who had worked in Nicaragua and came to ask me if he would stay in El Salvador again, was waiting for me. However, he concluded that it was inadvisable to stay, since in this climate of repression and mutual distrust, his Nicaraguan origin could cause problems for him. At the same time, he wishes to continue his pastoral work, primarily with workers in the Diocese of Estelí, Nicaragua.

I was deeply edified by his consultative attitude and the humility with which he knelt at the end to ask for my blessing. May God bless him and always grant us that sense of our priesthood, which identifies us with the virtues of Jesus Christ.

Tuesday, March 18, 1980.

For the first time, the Franciscan Father of the Parish of La Reina invited me to visit his parish, specifically the subsidiary town of Agua Caliente, where he has prepared a large group of young people and children to receive Confirmation. The town is quite isolated, in the department of Chalatenango, but the wide road under construction makes it easy to access.

The welcome was very warm; they are very fervent people, but one senses a charismatic spiritual formation, where they live intense piety, but not a greater commitment to the current situation. I hope, however, that the new Archdiocesan Pastoral Commission will promote the Archdiocesan pastoral project in all parishes. Nonetheless, it was, I repeat, a very intense morning, lived as a community of faith and prayer.

That evening, I had a brief, confidential meeting with a representative of the group holding Mr. Dunn as a prisoner, with whom I urged that everything possible be done to release him as soon as possible. He promised to do as I suggested, but that the decision would rest with the group's leadership. I pray that Mr. Dunn, who has been held captive for several months, will be able to return home soon. However, Mr. Jaime Hill, who has also been held captive for several months, was recently released.

A raffle was held at Divine Providence Hospital to benefit the same organization, which always provides financial support to this work of God's true providence.

This morning, the Executive Council met at the Archbishop's Palace, where the radio station and the Secretariat of Social Communications were discussed. A note also

arrived from the Presidential Palace, conveying a complaint from a Cojutepeque commander against Father Ricardo Ayala, accused of involvement in the attack. Indoctrinating theMarxism to a group of peasants and announced to them that he would soon go to Nicaragua Already CubaHe carries weapons for subversion, which is extremely ridiculous, since Father Cayo Ayala is a very focused man and the accusation made him rather laugh.

The same goes for our Vicar General, with whom you had your conversation. It will then be argued how ridiculous these accusations are and that a government that relies on such information cannot be just.

In Planes de Renderos, at the "María Eugenia" house, the Pastoral Council meeting concluded today with the new Vicars and new projects for the year's work. I was unable to attend. It's morning.for having gone to the location indicated above.

In general, there is a climate of tension and violence. The military's encirclement of the Presidential Palace has created a bad impression, which is provoking further violence from the left. As long as this spirit of repression by the Armed Forces against the people remains unchecked, it will continue.causing many problems As soon as.

On the other hand, agrarian and banking reforms are moving forward, but people can't accept them as long as this horrible repression persists, which is felt everywhere. In the town I visited, and where I was also on Sunday, there are many complaints, but because of the reigning terror, people can't speak freely about everything that's happening.

Last night I also received news that an ecumenical commission from the United States will be arriving in El Salvador.

Archbishop Arzube, along with a pastor from the National Council of Churches and other representatives from Human Rights and Amnesty International, gathered firsthand information on what was happening in our country. I told them I was happy to welcome them and that I hoped the bishop who was coming would participate in the consecration next Sunday.

Wednesday, March 19, 1980.

On this feast day of Saint Joseph, I celebrated the first Mass at the Cristóbal Colón School, run by the Josephite Fathers. I told them that Saint Joseph was the model of the man our country needs today, with his commitment to justice, collaboration, and faith. Professor Moreno spoke on behalf of the entire school to praise their bishop. The teachers also presented a donation to Radio Ysax. The proceeds from that large collection also went to our radio station; a gesture I greatly appreciated.

I visited the Radio Ysax repair shop at Domus Mariae. I met Father Pick, who was on his way to the health center because he was feeling a little unwell. The quiet work of this Jesuit, who is helping us repair our Radio Ysax with such high-tech expertise, is admirable.

I spent some time in the Curia, where I received several visitors. The most notable was that of Fathers Torruella and Mejía, who presented some reflections from a group of priests concerned about the politicization of some priests. They invited me to consider the

possibility of dialogue between the various sectors of the clergy and, if possible, to conduct a survey to neutralize any elements that might divide us as priests. I thanked them for their valuable suggestions and asked for their cooperation.

With my brotherArnold,who helps me organize the treasury and other aspects of the Curia's administration, we discussed the current shortcomings, especially on the part of the administrator and the Secretariat for Social Communications, particularly in the printing office and the secretariat itself.

I told him to help me solve these serious problems and tomorrow we will have a meeting with this goal.

At four in the afternoon, we had a meeting with the Council or Committee for Humanitarian Aid. It's an ecumenical committee, which also includes Caritas, and the goal was to address a problem that arises in refugee camps: the exploitation of these people by representatives of grassroots political organizations for their political activities. We tried to clarify that a shelter should not be considered an operational headquarters.

There were many discussions, and I still have the impression of excessive politicization in the statements of Father Rogelio and Father Tilo Sánchez, as well as those of other participants in the meeting. But I was also very satisfied with the very focused position of some priests and members of the Protestant denominations who collaborate on this ecumenical committee. Even the head of Caritas... Carmen is missing,you were very precise in this direction.

Then I went to celebrate my second Mass of Saint Joseph at the Somascan Seminary, where a group of refugees from Cojutepeque and Chalatenango are also

staying. The homily was in the same vein as the Cristóbal Colón School, and after Mass, we had dinner with the seminarians and the Fathers, and a very interesting discussion ensued on the current situation in El Salvador and the role of the Church. The seminarians also shared some information that they very intelligently sought to gather.

Finally, this evening, the president of Cor Unum, the pontifical office that coordinates various organizations for promotion, charity, and social action, came. I frankly expressed the inefficiency of our national Caritas and our desire to make the diocesan Caritas more active in the formation of Christian love. He promised to support the archdiocesan programs, but that...presentable. These programs, which we will implement tomorrow with Caritas and the Ecumenical Commission for Humanitarian Aid.

Thursday, March 20, 1980.

At eight in the morning I had a short meeting with the Board of Directors, which my brother Arnoldo also attended with a report on the Curia's accounting and finances. The situation is quite worrying, as we have only spent our subsidies and have no hope of self-financing our expenses.

I said I was willing to accept any suggestions they gave me, especially regarding personnel changes and the elimination of certain positions, and I let them study them, since I had to leave for the Senate meeting in Planes de Renderos, at the "María Eugenia" house of the Sisters of La Asunción. It is the first meeting of the new Senate. I was especially urged to ensure the unity of the clergy, since all the clergy were represented in the Senate, with its different currents and different ways of thinking of our priests.

I also told them that we needed to establish a human foundation of trust, friendship, and sincerity in our meeting, since the sense of faith and supernatural power with which we should view each other in the context of our priestly vocation are not enough. Rather, this human foundation of friendship is what will give a pleasant, practical, and effective meaning to our teamwork, primarily for the benefit of all the priests we represent.

After reviewing the Senate's statutes and duties, elections were held, electing Father Cristóbal Cortés as president, Father Juan Macho as vice president, and Father José Luis Burguet as secretary. In a very cordial atmosphere, initial points were discussed, particularly how to streamline the Senate's service.

And it was concluded that the Council would be designated as a permanent Council, to oversee the institutions of the Diocese and the Prelate, and to guide the life of the Senate promptly, in the service of this dialogue with the Bishop and according to circumstances, however unexpected they may seem.

Then, also seeking to serve the clergy and taking into account the current situation, three commissions were organized: one that will be primarily dedicated to cultivating the unity of the clergy, another that will guide relations between the clergy and society, all those socio-political aspects that often divide us or prevent us from working together, and a third commission, which we call infrastructure, which will deal with the various practical aspects of the clergy, such as culture, spirituality, health, social benefits and subsistence, etc.

Afterwards, we discussed in depth the practical issues surrounding the political differences that divide us, given the highly politicized and polarized environment in the

country. We finished lunch at 1:00 AM, in a consistently friendly and optimistic atmosphere.

In the afternoon, a meeting with representatives of the Popular Leagues of February 28, who were unable to meet you in person, but were assisted on my behalf by Father Rafael Urrutia and Roberto Cuéllar.

During the same period, I had a meeting with Father Pedraz, a Jesuit with notable administrative skills, to ask him, in accordance with the conversion of the Administrative Commission, to help us reorganize our archdiocesan administration, having the authority to review the various aspects discussed in the Administrative Commission meeting, and that the Administrative Commission work in agreement with him.

He told me that he has always been willing to serve and that I should give him just a few days to reflect on his decision, possibly next Sunday or Monday, and I hope it will be affirmative, so that he can quickly address this situation, which concerns me, regarding the finances and administration of our archdiocese.

I also met with the head of Caritas and a representative of the World Council for Humanitarian Aid to present the projects and work of Caritas and the Ecumenical Commission, which they carry out for our people in need. I also met with the representative of Cor Unum in Rome, who is with us. We visited him at the Nunciature, where he proved very welcoming and understanding of the difficulties and projects of the archdiocese Caritas, as well as the current emergencies.

Friday, March 21, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Saturday, March 22, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Sunday, March 23, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

Monday, March 24, 1980.

There is no trace of Monsignor Romero for these dates. His absence remains, as evidenced by the original transcripts.

FINE.

NOTE: Monsignor Romero did not record the last four days of his life in his diary.

Organizations and institutions mentioned in the newspaper.

Adveniat: International organization founded by the bishops of Germany.

Ageus: General Association of University Students.

Andes: National Association of Salvadoran Educators.

Anep: National Association of Private Enterprises.

Antel: National Telecommunications Administration.

Bpr: Popular Revolutionary Block.

Caritas: Institution of ecclesiastical assistance.

Cedes: Episcopal Conference of El Salvador.

Celam: Episcopal Council of El Salvador.

ClearLatin American Confederation of Religious.

Confres: Confederation of Religion of El Salvador.

CRS: Catholic Rescue Service.

Cuts: Central Unitary of Salvadoran Workers.

ERP: People's Revolutionary Army.

Fapu: Unified Popular Action Front.

Farn: Armed Forces of National Resistance.

Feccas: Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants.

Fenastras: National Federation of Workers' Unions.

FMLN: Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

FPL: Popular Liberation Forces.

MNR: National Revolutionary Movement.

National Guard: Government Security Corps.

National Police: Government security force.

Tax Police: Government Security Corps.

Order: Nationalist Democratic Organization.

Sedac: Episcopal Secretariat of Central America and Panama.

Udn: Nationalist Democratic Union.

Ugb: Union of White Warriors.

One: National Opposition Union.

UTC: Agricultural Workers' Union.

Minimum accommodation: Government office.

Presbyteral Senate: consultative body of the bishop composed of elected priests.

Epilogue.

Wars are fought daily. For millennia, humans have been unable to coexist and have armed themselves to fight, without ever resolving their conflicts. Wars are the negation of rhetoric, of words. They are the distancing from dialogue, from sharing, from confrontation, above all, with oneself. War is the censorship of ignorance, and this is why humans cannot renounce war and violence: because they cannot renounce ignorance and fear.

Monsignor Romero conquered ignorance, he conquered fear, as his words in his homilies clearly demonstrated, earning him a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978. And thanks to his unshakeable faith in God, he was able to live with the threat of death without ever losing faith or courage, without ever resorting to verbal violence, always exhorting people to peace, dialogue, and the Gospel.

Monsignor Romero died for this, for his word, without weapons, without fear, and even today his sacrifice shows us the possible path to a world free from war and violence.

Conclusion.

That man, that shepherd of God, became a symbol of freedom and hope (still as strong and effective today), becoming a predestined target, a sacrificial victim, and the sole voice of a country in disarray. He served the Church, the poor, and the vulnerable, hoping to stop that civil war in its infancy. A war that tormented him, hearing daily of ruthless and brutal massacres.

His message has always been a simple and unceasing appeal for peace, respect for human rights, and dialogue in a country ravaged by civil war, a country where the Church has been devastated and attacked head-on.

Literature.

Original title.

Monsignor Oscar A. Romero - His Diary -.

From Friday, March 31, 1978 to Thursday, March 20, 1980.
- Oscar A. Romero.

Archbishopric.
Post Office Box 2253.
Telephone: 26-6066 to 26-3479.
Isidro Menéndez Urbanization.
Via San José and Avenida Las Américas.
San Salvador, El Salvador, California

The undersigned Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, CERTIFIES THAT: (a) he has compared listening to the 30 original cassettes containing the diary of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero recorded by himself, with reading the writing taken from the diary, prepared for publication, (b) that both documents agree completely with each other.

In witness whereof, I sign and seal this document.

Given at San Salvador, the tenth day of October in the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine.

Priest Rafael Urrutia.
Chancellor.

Uca.

Cervantes Virtual Library.

Archbishop Romero Foundation.

Glossary.

*Association:*An organization formed by a group of people with the aim of achieving a specific goal. These alliances can also be called voluntary organizations, charitable associations, and unincorporated civil associations. Non-governmental organizations (Ngo's) are associations that form the basis of what is known as "civil society."

*Public:*This is a process in which interested parties and any other parties who may be affected by the outcome have the opportunity to present a case, ask questions, or raise objections regarding a matter. For example, a hearing may be held by a local or national government, an international organization, or a special commission.

*Autocracy:*the government of a single person or small group that has unlimited power or authority or the power or authority of that person or group.

*African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:*It is sometimes also called the African Charter; a regional treaty on human rights on the African continent adopted by the Organization of African Unity (Egg) in 1981. The Arab Charter on Human Rights, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on 22 May 2004, affirms the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.

*Charter of the United Nations:*Treaty establishing the United Nations. Adopted unanimously on June 25, 1945, it establishes the rights and obligations of member states, as well as the organs and procedures of the United Nations.

*Charter of Fundamental Rights:*Treaty establishing the political, economic, and social rights of citizens of the European Union. It binds Eu member states in the application of Eu law.

*International Bill of Human Rights:*an informal name given collectively to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Udhr),al International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Iccpr) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Icescr) and their Optional Protocols.

*Paper:*It is a document that establishes the granting of rights or privileges.

Citizenship:(a) a legal relationship between a person and a State, which gives rise to mutual rights and obligations, orb) the one used to describe the general relationship between individuals and the state to which they are "attached", the forms of behavior and attitudes.

*Code, code:*the process of formalizing a law or rights in written instruments.

*Human Rights Commission:*body of the Eu currently replaced by the Human Rights Council.

*Commissioner for Human Rights:*An independent institution of the Council of Europe responsible for promoting awareness of and respect for human rights in Council

of Europe member states. See also the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

*Human Rights Committee:*a United Nations body composed of 18 experts that meets three times a year to review the five annual reports submitted by the Organization's 162 member states. He Sulla its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

*Expertise:*Ability to perform a job or task. Regarding human rights advocacy, the knowledge and understanding necessary for young people to better understand human rights issues and the skills, attitudes, and values needed to defend them.

*Human Rights Council:*An intergovernmental body within the United Nations system, composed of 47 states, responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. The Council was established by the UN General Assembly in March 2006 to replace the Commission on Human Rights, with the primary objective of addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them.

Peacebuilding:(including post-conflict peace) actions taken in the medium and long term to address the root causes of violent conflict.

*Constitution:*A set of laws that govern a country or organization. In most countries, the Constitution is written and accepted as the supreme law; it establishes the foundation of the state and its political system. About four countries do not have a written Constitution; in these cases, the law develops through court decisions and precedents. American Convention on Human Rights (American Convention); a human rights treaty

adopted by the Organization of American States (Oea) in 1969. It includes North, Central and South America.

*Geneva Convention:*It comprises four treaties adopted in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross (Icrc) in Geneva, Switzerland. It establishes the rules applicable in armed conflict, particularly regarding the treatment of sick and wounded soldiers, sailors, and airmen, prisoners of war, and civilians of the enemy.

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Echr):(European Convention on Human Rights), a regional human rights treaty adopted in 1950 by the Council of Europe. All Council of Europe member states are parties to the European Convention on Human Rights, and new member states are expected to ratify the convention as soon as possible.

*Convention:*A binding agreement between states; used as a synonym for treaty and pact. A convention is stronger than a declaration because it is legally binding on the states that have ratified it.

*Framework agreement:*A convention that establishes the principles and rules by which international action is to be conducted and establishes a procedure for negotiating the more detailed issues necessary to address the issue.

International Court of Justice (Icj):(International Court); is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, its main functions are to resolve legal disputes brought to its attention by states and to issue advisory opinions on legal questions referred by duly authorized international bodies,

other agencies, and the United Nations General Assembly. (The Court should not be confused with the International Criminal Court.)

*International Criminal Court (Icc):*A permanent tribunal established in 2002 and based in The Hague, Netherlands, to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. (The International Criminal Court should not be confused with the International Court of Justice.)

*War crimes:*Crimes committed during conflict, whether internal or international, involving serious violations of humanitarian law or other laws relating to armed conflict. The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, together with the Geneva Convention of 1949, are among the first official international laws on war, war crimes, and the humanitarian treatment of war victims.

*Crimes against humanity:*Widespread or systematic acts of violence against the civilian population. For example, murder, extermination, enslavement, torture, rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy; persecution of a group based on race, ethnic origin, gender, or other grounds; enforced disappearance of persons; the crime of apartheid; and other similar inhumane acts intentionally causing great suffering or serious harm to physical integrity or to mental or physical health.

*Culture:*a broad set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices, often based on historical traditions shared by an institution, organization, or group.

*Declaration of Rights:*A declaration contained in a constitution on human or civil rights that lists protections against government interference. See also the International Bill of Human Rights.

*Declaration of the Rights of the Child:*Approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, this non-binding instrument establishes ten general principles that later formed the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Crc), adopted in 1989.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Udhr):(Universal Declaration), adopted by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The principal United Nations document establishing human rights standards and the obligations of all member states that have committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although the declaration was not intended to be binding, over time its various provisions have become so widely recognized that they can be considered part of customary international law.

*Declaration:*A document that establishes an agreement on principles and standards but is not legally binding. Examples include United Nations conferences, such as the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. These conferences typically produce two types of declarations: one drafted by government representatives and the other by non-governmental organizations (Ngo's). The Un General Assembly often produces influential but non-legally binding declarations.

*Ombudsman:*An independent official, usually appointed by the government or parliament, responsible for investigating complaints from citizens. The term "ombudsman" comes from Old Norse and means "representative."

*Democracy:*a form of government in which the authority to govern derives from the people, either directly or through popularly elected representatives who have the right to vote.

*Right to development:*the right of groups to grow in their cultural, political and economic human rights and that fundamental freedoms may grow fully or progressively. Declaration of Him on right to development of 1986.

*International humanitarian law:*The body of laws, based primarily on the Geneva Conventions, protects individuals in armed conflict, assists victims, and limits the methods and means of warfare to minimize destruction, loss of life, and unnecessary human suffering.

Civil rights:(sometimes known as civil liberties); the category of rights and freedoms that protect individuals from unjustified government action and ensure their ability to participate in the civil life of the state without discrimination or repression.

*Collective rights:*Group rights that protect their interests and identity; sometimes called "third-generation rights." These are in addition to individual rights.

*Cultural rights:*the right to preserve cultural identity and development.

*Solidarity rights:*see collective rights.

*Third generation rights:*Rights that emerged in the second half of the 20th century, which are not civil and political rights, but rather economic and social rights. These

include the right to a healthy environment, peace, development, and natural resources. See also collective rights.

*Economic rights:*The rights relating to the production, development and management of the material goods necessary for life, proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guaranteed by the Covenant and the European Social Charter.

*Human Rights:*The rights universally enjoyed by all human beings. They are indivisible, inalienable, and universal, and respect the equality and dignity of every person.

*Legal rights:*the rights established by law and which may be defended and brought before a court. It is also used to describe procedural rights, such as the right to a fair trial.

*Moral rights:*rights deriving from general ethical principles, such as fairness and justice.

*Natural rights:*Rights that people have simply because they are human. Also called inalienable rights, they are considered self-evident and universal, independent of the laws, customs, or beliefs of any particular culture or government.

*Political rights:*the right of people to participate in the political life of their community and society and to vote to elect their government.

*Social rights:*the rights necessary for full participation in society. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Icescr), and the European Social Charter guarantee social rights.

*Disappearance:*An expression used when people disappear because they are secretly killed or imprisoned by the government or other organizations. They disappear because of their political views or activities that challenge an unjust regime or the doctrine of their organizations.

Development: A broad economic, social, cultural, and political process aimed at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and all individuals, based on their active, free, and meaningful participation in development and the equitable distribution of the benefits resulting from that development. See also right to development.

*Discrimination:*any distinction, exclusion or restriction of your preferences based on areas such as race, culture, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, physical disability or other characteristics not relevant to the matter in question.

*Economic:*relating to factors inherent in the production, development or management of material wealth.

*Formal education:*It is the structured system of education and training that extends from preschool, primary, secondary, and university. It typically takes place in general education or vocational training institutions and leads to a certification.

*Informal education:*The lifelong process through which each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge drawn from everyday experiences, educational influences, and the resources of his or her environment (family, peers, neighbors, markets, libraries, media, work, leisure, etc.).

*Non-formal education:*Any educational program outside the formal education system designed to improve a range of skills and abilities, such as youth work. Non-formal education is also known as informal learning.

*Entry into force:*The process by which a treaty becomes fully binding on the states that have ratified it, which occurs when the minimum number of ratifications required by the treaty has been reached.

*Slavery:*A practice based on a relationship of power and submission, in which one person possesses another and can extort, exploit, or obtain other services from them. Modern forms of slavery include the sale of children, child prostitution, the exploitation of child labor, the use of children in armed conflict, debt bondage, human trafficking, the exploitation of prostitution, and forced labor.

*Member States:*countries that are members of an intergovernmental organization (e.g., the United Nations, the Council of Europe).

*Stereotype:*A simplified, generalized, and often unconscious preconceived idea about people or ideas that can lead to prejudice and discrimination. A generalization in which the characteristics possessed by one group are extended to the entire group.

*Assessment:*A structured conversation between facilitators and participants allows the latter to analyze and evaluate what they have learned in a participatory and experiential activity. In the process, participants reflect on how this learning connects to what they already know and how they can use it in the future.

*Capacity Evolution:*Principle used in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Crc) which recommends greater exercise of children's rights in relation to their growing cognitive and emotional maturity.

*Exception:*A treaty declaration by a member state that allows the state to suspend or limit certain rights, such as in times of war. Some rights can never be suspended, such as the right not to be subjected to torture.

*Facilitator:*A person who prepares, presents, and coordinates Compass activities. This person is someone who "does something," who "helps," and who encourages others to learn and develop their potential. The facilitator's role is to create a safe environment where participants learn through experimentation, exploration, giving, and receiving. This is not an "expert" leader who imparts knowledge to others. Everyone should grow through sharing experiences, both participants and facilitators.

*Fascism:*A system of government based on an ideology of racial or national supremacy and the importance of controlling all aspects of political, economic, and cultural life. It may be characterized by violent repression of opposition and criticism, control of the media, state control of industry, commerce, etc., and by aggressive nationalism and often racism.

*Commercial activity:*Signing a treaty is the first step toward becoming a party to it, which invariably means a step toward ratification. By signing a treaty, a state expresses its intention, in the future, to accept all the obligations arising from the treaty and, in the meantime, to refrain from any behavior inconsistent with those obligations.

*Training:*the process of learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to perform a particular job or develop a business, for example to be able to defend human rights.

*Trainer:*A person who prepares programs for learning activities, such as discussions, study visits, film screenings, or Compass activities, with a group of participants. In conducting Compass activities, the trainer or teacher interacts democratically with the group of young people and acts as a facilitator.

*Type:*The social construction of roles, attitudes, values, and relationships between women and men. While sex is determined by biological differences between men and women, gender is determined by society; it almost always serves to subordinate women to men.

*Genocide:*Systematic killing with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a group of people because of their nationality, race, ethnicity, or religion. It also causes serious physical or mental harm and the forcible transfer of children from the group in question to another group.

*Conflict Management:*Actions undertaken with the primary objective of preventing vertical escalation (intensification of violence) or horizontal escalation (territorial distribution) of violent conflicts.

*Skills:*The ability to perform an activity or task well, especially through practice. The ability to defend human rights includes, for example, communication and problem-solving skills, creative thinking, negotiation, and teamwork.

*Rule of law:*No one, be they a government official, a king, or a president, is above the law. The same law binds both the rulers and the ruled.

*Inalienable:*It refers to the rights that belong to every person and which cannot be revoked under any circumstances.

*Indivisible:*refers to the importance of all theHuman rights as part of an indivisible and inseparable whole. A person cannot be denied a particular human right because it is "less important" than another, or "non-essential."

*Shadow ratio:*An informal report prepared by institutions or individuals representing civil society today before a human rights treaty monitoring commission. These reports often contradict or complement official treaty compliance and implementation documents submitted by a government as part of its contractual obligations.

*Instruments:*Any official document drawn up by one or more states that establishes rights as non-binding principles (a declaration) or codifies rights that are legally binding on the states that ratify them (a pact, treaty, or convention). They can be national or international.

*Intercultural:*It refers to the interdependence and interaction between different ethnic and linguistic groups. An intercultural perspective requires us to recognize that reality is plural, complex, and dynamic, and that interaction is an integral part of every life and culture.

*Interdependent:*It refers to the idea that the enjoyment of a particular human right depends on the enjoyment of all others. For example, a person's ability to participate in government is directly influenced by their right to freedom of expression, their health, their freedom of movement, and their freedom from discrimination.

*Role Playing Game:*A short theatrical performance performed by participants. Participants use their own life experiences to act out a situation. They are mostly improvised. The aim is to allow participants to experiment with situations and explore solutions to problems in a safe environment.

*Jurisprudence:*A legal term referring to a collection of case studies and the principles established in those cases by a specific court, such as the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

*Freedom of expression:*Freedom to express opinions in the press and other media, and to receive and impart ideas. The term "freedom of expression" is often used broadly to refer to one or both articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Articles 18 and 19.

*Human Rights Framework:*The evolving framework is intertwined with international and regional instruments that define human rights and establish mechanisms to promote and protect those rights and freedoms.

*Mediation:*a process by which a third party helps conflicting parties resolve their disagreements about a given issue and find common ground that both can agree on.

*Irregular migration:*a term used by most migration researchers, in place of "illegal," "undocumented," or "unauthorized" migrants, to emphasize that no person is illegal as such.

*Intergovernmental Organizations (Igo's):*Organizations sponsored by different governments that seek to coordinate their efforts. The United Nations is an international intergovernmental organization. Some regional intergovernmental organizations include the Council of Europe and the Organization of African Unity; some are alliances, such as Nato (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and others are dedicated to a specific purpose, such as the International Organization for Migration (Iom).

Non-governmental organizations (Ngo's): the organizations Yes, These are organizations independent of the government, usually with an influential, charitable, or activist role. Some are large and international, such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the World Organization of the Scout Movement, Human Rights Watch, or the European Youth Forum. Others may be small and local, such as an organization advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in a particular city; a coalition promoting women's rights in a refugee camp. You can search for non-governmental organizations in your country on the Council of Europe website.

*Internally Displaced Persons (Idp):*persons or groups of persons who have been forced to abandon their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or

man-made natural disasters, or to avoid their effects, and who have not crossed an international border.

*Indigenous peoples:*They are defined as much by their relationship to the land as by any intrinsic characteristics they may possess. They have suffered colonization, have always been marginalized by their states, and are often tribal. Many indigenous peoples demand recognition of their rights as distinct peoples, including the right to self-determination and the right to control the development of their societies. See the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007.

*Minorities:*Any ethnic, linguistic, or religious group within a state, in a non-dominant position, composed of people who have a sense of belonging to that group and are determined to preserve and develop its identity.

*Multicultural:*People of different cultures living together in a community, interacting at various levels while maintaining their distinctive characteristics. The United Nations is an international intergovernmental organization (Igo) founded in 1945 after World War II with the aim of maintaining international peace and security, promoting friendly relations among nations, and promoting social progress, improved living standards, and human rights.

*Negotiation:*the process by which, in a dispute with one another, people talk to reach a solution to their problem.

*Oligarchy:*government by a small group of powerful people.

*International Labour Organization (Ilo):*Created in 1919, it is a tripartite agency of the United Nations that brings together governments,businessmen and workers of their Member States to promote decent work worldwide.

*World Health Organization (Who):*An intergovernmental organization under the auspices of the United Nations that works to promote health worldwide. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

*Agreement:*A binding agreement between states; used as a synonym for convention and treaty. The main international human rights covenants, adopted in 1966, are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Iccpr) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Icescr).

European Parliament: And the institution chosen as the Organ Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union. The Parliament has two seats, Strasbourg and Brussels, and is composed of 736 members.

*Youth participation:*see participation.

*Palo:*Involvement in the public life of a community or society. The European Charter on Youth Participation at Local and Regional Level, adopted by the Council of Europe Congress in 2003, is an international standard-setting document for promoting youth participation at the local level.

*Death penalty:*The state-imposed death penalty as punishment for a crime. The European Convention on Human Rights initially permitted the death penalty in certain

cases, but it is now prohibited within its territory (Protocol 6), even in times of war (Protocol 13). Most countries in the world have abolished the death penalty.

*Plutocrazia:*a system in which the wealthiest people govern or have power in a country.

*Vital posture:*A set of ideas that helps us understand the world and find meaning and value in life; a common label that encompasses both religions and alternatives to religion, without discriminating in favor of either.

*Conflict Prevention:*actions taken in the short term to reduce manifest tensions and/or to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict.

*First generation of rights:*Rights that were generally recognized as human rights in the 17th or 18th century. It includes all civil and political rights, such as the right to vote, the right to life and liberty, freedom of expression and religion, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Iccpr), which primarily codifies these rights. Because the term suggests a hierarchy of rights (first-generation civil and political rights and second-generation economic and social rights), it is increasingly used less.

*Promotion:*to publicly support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something.

*Optional protocol:*A treaty that amends another treaty, for example by adding additional procedures or provisions. It is called "optional" because a government that ratified the original treaty can choose whether or not to ratify the amendments introduced in the protocol.

*Racism:*the belief that people's qualities are influenced by their ethnicity or tribe and that members of other tribes and groups ("races") are not as good as members of their own group, or the resulting unfair treatment of members of other "races."

*Ratifies:*The process by which a state's legislature confirms the government's action in signing a treaty; that is, the formal procedure by which a state commits to abide by a treaty after its acceptance. Upon ratification, a state becomes a party to the treaty.

*Reflection and final evaluation:*A structured conversation between facilitators and participants to review the experiential and participatory activity; to discuss what happened and how participants felt. The goal is to help participants clarify thoughts and feelings in a safe environment.

*Refugees:*Anyone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their citizenship and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country or its people. The term is also used more generally to describe anyone in a refugee-like situation, such as asylum seekers.

*Special Rapporteur:*A person appointed by a human rights body, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, to report on a specific issue, such as the right to adequate housing, child prostitution and child pornography, violence against women, or the human rights situation in a particular country.

*Responsibility:*a process that requires governments to demonstrate, explain, and justify how they have fulfilled their obligations to their citizens.

*Reservation:*For example, exceptions made by states to a treaty, or provisions they refuse to abide by. Reservations, however, cannot diminish the fundamental meaning of the treaty.

*Conflict Resolution:*actions taken in the short term to end violent conflict.

*Separation of powers:*The separation of government powers into different branches, so that none of them can exercise absolute control. The normal division is between the legislature, which enacts the laws; the executive, which enforces them; and an independent judiciary, which oversees compliance with the laws.

*Sex:*Biological differences between men and women, which are universal and immutable, contrast with gender, which refers to attributes learned or acquired during the socialization of members of a given community.

*Simulation:*a broad, structured role-playing game that places participants in unfamiliar situations and roles.

*Union:*An association of workers in a specific company or sector committed to promoting the common interests of workers, such as better working conditions. The right to form and join trade unions, as well as the right to collective wage bargaining, are widely recognized human rights instruments.

*Civil society:*It refers collectively to voluntary civic and social organizations, associations, and institutions, such as registered charities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, religious organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, and support groups, that form the basis of a functioning democratic society. Civil society is considered distinct from the state and commercial market organizations.

*Asylum seeker:*a person who has sought international protection and whose request for formal recognition of refugee status has not yet been resolved.

*Tolerance:*the willingness to accept behaviors and beliefs different from one's own, even if one does not agree with them. Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (Unesco 1995).

*Conflict Transformation:*The process by which conflicts, such as wars and inter-ethnic and religious violence, are modified or transformed into peaceful outcomes. It is a long-term process that addresses the causes of conflict as well as the behaviors and attitudes of the parties involved.

Treaties:(used as a synonym for convention and pact); a formal agreement between nation states that defines and modifies their duties and obligations to each other. WhenA state ratifies a treaty that has been approved, the articles of that treaty become binding on its legal system.

*Universality:*the principle that all human rights are recognized for all people, in all states and in all societies of the world.

Biography.

José Baires (San Salvador, 1966) Researcher, curator, and independent author. He has worked on editing projects for historical, scientific, and spiritual texts, developing materials for academic research and cultural memory. Since 2010, he has focused his efforts on editing and structuring the Diary of Monsignor Óscar A. Romero, offering an innovative approach that integrates documentary rigor and new technological tools.

Over the years, he has collaborated on data analysis projects, workplace safety consulting, and editorial content development, with a focus on accuracy and accessibility. A tenacious researcher and meticulous editorial curator, he combines respect for the original source with a quest for new formats for dissemination. Passionate about writing and socially impactful narratives, his work focuses on opening new avenues of access to Latin America's historical and spiritual heritage.

Gian Luca Bianco (Milan, 1967) Director, artist, author. He has directed films and documentaries, theatrical productions, and published two books. He creates and curates art exhibitions in Italy and abroad. Since 2016, he has focused on the idea of the fragment, which has given rise to a series of works entitledUnsteady,a profound reflection on the theme of destruction and loss of both affections and material possessions.Unsteady Over the years he has performed on several public occasions and in various Italian and foreign cities such as Milan, Monza, Gubbio, Macerata, Perugia, Gemonio, Innsbruck, Barcelona, New York, Dusseldorf, receiving acclaim from the public and critics.

Artistic consultant for a major Italian banking group, for which he handles art, as well as other clients active in the world of art and culture. A versatile and multifaceted artist, he lived for many years in New York, immersing himself in the urban landscape of the Big Apple and developing projects that are sometimes disparate, yet united by a desire to understand and constantly question everything. Passionate about stories, he is drawn to human experiences and the relationship with nature, which is at the heart of all his projects. He has lived in Assisi, Umbria, for several years.

Colophon.

Original book idea: José Baires, Roatán, Honduras, 2023.
Original documentary idea: Gian Luca Bianco, Assisi, Italy, 2010.
Edition and digital format: José Baires, September 2025.
Valuable collaboration: Dr. Guillermo Padilla Cárcamo.

Title.

SAINT OSCAR - IN THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Original title.

Monsignor Oscar A. Romero. His diary.

From Friday, March 31, 1978 to Thursday, March 20, 1980. Oscar A. Romero.

Archbishopric.
Post Office Box 2253.
Telephone: 26-6066 to 26-3479.
Isidro Menéndez Urbanization.
Via San José and Avenida Las Américas.
San Salvador, El Salvador, California

The undersigned Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, CERTIFIES THAT: (a) he has compared listening to the 30 original cassettes containing the diary of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero recorded by himself, with reading the writing taken from the diary, prepared for publication, (b) that both documents agree completely with each other.

In witness whereof, I sign and seal this document.

Given at San Salvador, the tenth day of October in the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine.

Priest Rafael Urrutia.
Chancellor.

Legal Notes / Editorial Note.

This edition is a selected transcription of original public domain material. Each entry has been carefully edited and formatted by the author for maximum clarity. No copyright is claimed on the original entries. All editorial contributions are the property of the author. Any inconsistencies reflect the oral nature of Archbishop Romero's recordings and preserve their historical authenticity.

First digital edition: 2025 Self-published via Kindle Direct Publishing (Amazon) San Salvador - Milan.

Idea originale del libro di José Baires, Roatan, Honduras nel 2023.
Editing and editorial care: José Baires.
Original idea for the documentary project and collaboration: Gian Luca Bianco.
Cover design: José Baires.
Image: Archivio Storico, Rome, 1978, Creative Commons - Wikimedia.

All rights reserved for the editorial work on this 2025 edition. Selection, editing, formatting, and presentation. The original diary of Monsignor Óscar A. Romero is in the public domain.

Note on translations.

The English and Italian versions were translated using Google Docs and reviewed by the author with editorial support.

The French, German, and other language versions are presented as machine translations and may differ in their use of local expressions.

San Óscar spoke in a singular way, addressing the poorest and most humble, and his language reflected that closeness; this makes his words difficult to render fully into English or any other language, where the translation may sound unusual but preserves the original Salvadoran context.

Index.

Title.
Dedication.
Legal notice.
Theme.
Preliminary note.
Editor's note.
Explanatory note.
Introduction.
- Diary from March 31st to April 12th.
  - Friday, March 31, 1978.
  - Saturday, April 1, 1978.
  - Sunday, April 2, 1978.
  - Monday, April 3, 1978.
  - Tuesday, April 4, 1978.
  - Wednesday, April 5, 1978.
  - Thursday, April 6, 1978.
  - Friday, April 7, 1978.
  - Saturday, April 8, 1978.
  - Sunday, April 9, 1978.
  - Monday, April 10, 1978.
  - Tuesday, April 11, 1978.
  - Wednesday, April 12, 1978.

CHAPTER 2.
- Diary from April 13th to 28th.
  - Thursday, April 13, 1978.
  - Friday, April 14, 1978.
  - Saturday, April 15, 1978.
  - Sunday, April 16, 1978.
  - Monday, April 17, 1978.
  - Tuesday, April 18, 1978.
  - Wednesday, April 19, 1978.

Thursday, April 20, 1978.
Friday, April 21, 1978.
Saturday, April 22, 1978.
Sunday, April 23, 1978.
Monday, April 24, 1978.
Tuesday, April 25, 1978.
Wednesday, April 26, 1978.
Thursday, April 27, 1978.
Friday, April 28, 1978.
From Saturday 29 April to Saturday 20 May 1978.
.
CHAPTER 3.
Diary from May 21st to June 21st.
Sunday, May 21, 1978.
Monday, May 22, 1978.
Tuesday, May 23, 1978.
Wednesday, May 24, 1978.
Thursday, May 25, 1978.
Friday, May 26, 1978.
Saturday, May 27, 1978.
Sunday, May 28, 1978.
Monday, May 29, 1978.
Tuesday, May 30, 1978.
Wednesday, May 31, 1978.
Thursday, June 1, 1978.
Friday, June 2, 1978.
Saturday, June 3, 1978.
Sunday, June 4, 1978.
Monday, June 5, 1978.
Tuesday, June 6, 1978.
Wednesday, June 7, 1978.
Thursday, June 8, 1978.
Friday, June 9, 1978.

Saturday, June 10, 1978.
Sunday, June 11, 1978.
Monday, June 12, 1978.
Tuesday, June 13, 1978.
Wednesday, June 14, 1978.
Thursday, June 15, 1978.
Friday, June 16, 1978.
Saturday, June 17, 1978.
Sunday, June 18, 1978.
Monday, June 19, 1978.
Tuesday, June 20, 1978.
Wednesday, June 21, 1978.
CHAPTER 4.
Diary from June 22nd to July 3rd.
Thursday, June 22, 1978.
Friday, June 23, 1978.
Saturday, June 24, 1978.
Sunday, June 25, 1978.
Monday, June 26, 1978.
Tuesday, June 27, 1978.
Wednesday, June 28, 1978.
Thursday, June 29, 1978.
Thursday, June 30, 1978.
Friday, July 1, 1978.
Sunday, July 2, 1978.
Monday, July 3, 1978.
From Tuesday 4 July to Saturday 30 September 1978.
CHAPTER 5.
Diary from October 1st to December 5th.
Sunday, October 1, 1978.
Monday, October 2, 1978.
Tuesday, October 3, 1978.
Wednesday, October 4, 1978.

Thursday, October 5, 1978.
Friday, October 6, 1978.
Saturday, October 7, 1978.
Sunday, October 8, 1978.
Monday, October 9, 1978.
Tuesday, October 10, 1978.
Wednesday, October 11, 1978.
Thursday, October 12, 1978.
Friday, October 13, 1978.
Saturday, October 14, 1978.
Sunday, October 15, 1978.
Monday, October 16, 1978.
Tuesday, October 17, 1978.
Wednesday, October 18, 1978.
Thursday, October 19, 1978.
Friday, October 20, 1978.
Saturday, October 21, 1978.
Sunday, October 22, 1978.
Monday, October 23, 1978.
Tuesday, October 24, 1978.
Wednesday, October 25, 1978.
Thursday, October 26, 1978.
Friday, October 27, 1978.
Saturday, October 28, 1978.
Sunday, October 29, 1978.
Monday, October 30, 1978.
Tuesday, October 31, 1978.
Wednesday, November 1, 1978.
Thursday, November 2, 1978.
Friday, November 3, 1978.
Saturday, November 4, 1978.
Sunday, November 5, 1978.
Monday, November 6, 1978.

Tuesday, November 7, 1978.
Wednesday, November 8, 1978.
Thursday, November 9, 1978.
Friday, November 10, 1978.
Saturday, November 11, 1978.
Sunday, November 12, 1978.
Monday, November 13, 1978.
Tuesday, November 14, 1978.
Wednesday, November 15, 1978.
Thursday, November 16, 1978.
Friday, November 17, 1978.
Saturday, November 18, 1978.
Sunday, November 19, 1978.
Monday, November 20, 1978.
Tuesday, November 21, 1978.
Wednesday, November 22, 1978.
Thursday, November 23, 1978.
Friday, November 24, 1978.
Saturday, November 25, 1978.
Sunday, November 26, 1978.
Monday, November 27, 1978.
Tuesday, November 28, 1978.
Wednesday, November 29, 1978.
Thursday, November 30, 1978.
Friday, December 1, 1978.
Saturday, December 2, 1978.
Sunday, December 3, 1978.
Monday, December 4, 1978.
Tuesday, December 5, 1978.
CHAPTER 6.
Diary from December 6, 1978 to January 8.
Wednesday, December 6, 1978.
Thursday, December 7, 1978.

Friday, December 8, 1978.
Saturday, December 9, 1978.
Sunday, December 10, 1978.
Monday, December 11, 1978.
Tuesday, December 12, 1978.
Wednesday, December 13, 1978.
Thursday, December 14, 1978.
Friday, December 15, 1978.
Saturday, December 16, 1978.
Sunday, December 17, 1978.
Monday, December 18, 1978.
Tuesday, December 19, 1978.
Wednesday, December 20, 1978.
Thursday, December 21, 1978.
Friday, December 22, 1978.
Saturday, December 23, 1978.
Sunday, December 24, 1978.
Monday, December 25, 1978.
Tuesday, December 26, 1978.
Wednesday, December 27, 1978.
Thursday, December 28, 1978.
Friday, December 29, 1978.
Saturday, December 30, 1978.
Sunday, December 31, 1978.
Monday, January 1, 1979.
Tuesday, January 2, 1979.
Wednesday, January 3, 1979.
Thursday, January 4, 1979.
Friday, January 5, 1979.
Saturday, January 6, 1979.
Sunday, January 7, 1979.
Monday, January 8, 1979.
CHAPTER 7.

- Diary from January 9th to 28th.
  - Tuesday, January 9, 1979.
  - Wednesday, January 10, 1979.
  - Thursday, January 11, 1979.
  - Friday, January 12, 1979.
  - Saturday, January 13, 1979.
  - Sunday, January 14, 1979.
  - Monday, January 15, 1979.
  - Tuesday, January 16, 1979.
  - Wednesday, January 17, 1979.
  - Thursday, January 18, 1979.
  - Friday, January 19, 1979.
  - Saturday, January 20, 1979.
  - Sunday, January 21, 1979.
  - Monday, January 22, 1979.
  - Tuesday, January 23, 1979.
  - Wednesday, January 24, 1979.
  - Thursday, January 25, 1979.
  - Friday, January 26, 1979.
  - Saturday, January 27, 1979.
  - Sunday, January 28, 1979.
- CHAPTER 8.
  - Diary from January 29th to February 16th.
    - Monday, January 29, 1979.
    - Tuesday, January 30, 1979.
    - Wednesday, January 31, 1979.
    - Thursday, February 1, 1979.
    - Friday, February 2, 1979.
    - Saturday, February 3, 1979.
    - Sunday, February 4, 1979.
    - Monday, February 5, 1979.
    - Tuesday, February 6, 1979.
    - Wednesday, February 7, 1979.

Thursday, February 8, 1979.
Friday, February 9, 1979.
Saturday, February 10, 1979.
Sunday, February 11, 1979.
Monday, February 12, 1979.
Tuesday, February 13, 1979.
Wednesday, February 14, 1979.
Thursday, February 15, 1979.
CHAPTER 9.
Diary from February 16th to March 4th.
Friday, February 16, 1979.
Saturday, February 17, 1979.
Sunday, February 18, 1979.
Monday, February 19, 1979.
Wednesday, February 21, 1979.
Thursday, February 22, 1979.
Friday, February 23, 1979.
Saturday, February 24, 1979.
Sunday, February 25, 1979.
Monday, February 26, 1979.
Tuesday, February 27, 1979.
Wednesday, February 28, 1979.
Thursday, March 1, 1979.
Friday, March 2, 1979.
Saturday, March 3, 1979.
Sunday, March 4, 1979.
CHAPTER 10.
Diary from March 5th to 14th.
Monday, March 5, 1979.
From Tuesday, May 6th to Thursday, May 8th 1978.
Friday, March 9, 1979.
Saturday, March 10, 1979.
Sunday, March 11, 1979.

Monday, March 12, 1979.
Tuesday, March 13, 1979.
Wednesday, March 14, 1979.
CHAPTER 11.
Diary from March 15th to April 10th.
Thursday, March 15, 1979.
Friday, March 16, 1979.
Saturday, March 17, 1979.
Sunday, March 18, 1979.
From Monday 19th to Friday 23rd March 1979.
Saturday, March 24, 1979.
Sunday, March 25, 1979.
Monday, March 26, 1979.
Tuesday, March 27, 1979.
Wednesday, March 28, 1979.
Thursday, March 29, 1979.
Friday, March 30, 1979.
Saturday, March 31, 1979.
Sunday, April 1, 1979.
Monday, April 2, 1979.
Tuesday, April 3, 1979.
Wednesday, April 4, 1979.
Thursday, April 5, 1979.
Friday, April 6, 1979.
Saturday, April 7, 1979.
Sunday, April 8, 1979.
Holy Monday, April 9, 1979.
Holy Tuesday, April 10, 1979.
CHAPTER 12.
Diary from April 11th to 27th.
Holy Wednesday, April 11, 1979.
Holy Thursday, April 12, 1979.
Good Friday, April 13, 1979.

Holy Saturday, April 14, 1979.
Easter Sunday, April 15, 1979.
Monday, April 16, 1979.
Tuesday, April 17, 1979.
Wednesday, April 18, 1979.
Thursday, April 19, 1979.
Friday, April 20, 1979.
Saturday, April 21, 1979.
Sunday, April 22, 1979.
Monday, April 23, 1979.
Tuesday, April 24, 1979.
Wednesday, April 25, 1979.
Thursday, April 26, 1979.
Friday, April 27, 1979.
CHAPTER 13.
Diary from April 28th to May 9th.
Saturday, April 28, 1979.
Sunday, April 29, 1979.
Monday, April 30, 1979.
Tuesday, May 1, 1979.
Wednesday, May 2, 1979.
Thursday, May 3, 1979.
Friday, May 4, 1979.
Saturday, May 5, 1979.
Sunday, May 6, 1979.
Monday, May 7, 1979.
Tuesday, May 8, 1979.
Wednesday, May 9, 1979.
CHAPTER 14.
Diary from May 10th to 28th.
Thursday, May 10, 1979.
Friday, May 11, 1979.
Saturday, May 12, 1979.

Sunday, May 13, 1979.
Monday, May 14, 1979.
Tuesday, May 15, 1979.
Wednesday, May 16, 1979.
Thursday, May 17, 1979.
Friday, May 18, 1979.
Saturday, May 19, 1979.
Sunday, May 20, 1979.
Monday, May 21, 1979.
Tuesday, May 22, 1979.
Wednesday, May 23, 1979.
Thursday, May 24, 1979.
Friday, May 25, 1979.
Saturday, May 26, 1979.
Sunday, May 27, 1979.
Monday, May 28, 1979.
CHAPTER 15.
Diary from May 29th to June 19th.
Tuesday, May 29, 1979.
Wednesday, May 30, 1979.
Thursday, May 31, 1979.
Friday, June 1, 1979.
Saturday, June 2, 1979.
Sunday, June 3, 1979.
Monday, June 4, 1979.
Tuesday, June 5, 1979.
Wednesday, June 6, 1979.
Thursday, June 7, 1979.
Friday, June 8, 1979.
Saturday, June 9, 1979.
Sunday, June 10, 1979.
Monday, June 11, 1979.
Tuesday, June 12, 1979.

Wednesday, June 13, 1979.
Thursday, June 14, 1979.
Friday, June 15, 1979.
Saturday, June 16, 1979.
Sunday, June 17, 1979.
Monday, June 18, 1979.
Tuesday, June 19, 1979.
CHAPTER 16.
Diary from June 20th to July 8th.
Wednesday, June 20, 1979.
Thursday, June 21, 1979.
Friday, June 22, 1979.
Saturday, June 23, 1979.
Sunday, June 24, 1979.
Monday, June 25, 1979.
Tuesday, June 26, 1979.
Wednesday, June 27, 1979.
Thursday, June 28, 1979.
Friday, June 29, 1979.
Saturday, June 30, 1979.
Sunday, July 1, 1979.
Monday, July 2, 1979.
Tuesday, July 3, 1979.
Wednesday, July 4, 1979.
Thursday, July 5, 1979.
Friday, July 6, 1979.
Saturday, July 7, 1979.
Sunday, July 8, 1979.
CHAPTER 17.
Diary from July 9th to 27th.
Monday, July 9, 1979.
Tuesday, July 10, 1979.
Wednesday, July 11, 1979.

Thursday, July 12, 1979.
Friday, July 13, 1979.
Saturday, July 14, 1979.
Sunday, July 15, 1979.
Monday, July 16, 1979.
Tuesday, July 17, 1979.
Wednesday, July 18, 1979.
Thursday, July 19, 1979.
Friday, July 20, 1979.
Saturday, July 21, 1979.
Sunday, July 22, 1979.
Monday, July 23, 1979.
Tuesday, July 24, 1979.
Wednesday, July 25, 1979.
Thursday, July 26, 1979.
Friday, July 27, 1979.
CHAPTER 18.
Diary from July 28th to August 26th.
Saturday, July 28, 1979.
Sunday, July 29, 1979.
Monday, July 30, 1979.
Tuesday, July 31, 1979.
Wednesday, August 1, 1979.
Thursday, August 2, 1979.
Friday, August 3, 1979.
Saturday, August 4, 1979.
Sunday, August 5, 1979.
Monday, August 6, 1979.
Tuesday, August 7, 1979.
Wednesday, August 8, 1979.
Thursday, August 9, 1979.
Friday, August 10, 1979.
Saturday, August 11, 1979.

Sunday, August 12, 1979.
Monday, August 13, 1979.
Tuesday, August 14, 1979.
Wednesday, August 15, 1979.
Thursday, August 16, 1979.
Friday, August 17, 1979.
Saturday, August 18, 1979.
Sunday, August 19, 1979.
Monday, August 20, 1979.
Tuesday, August 21, 1979.
Wednesday, August 22, 1979.
Thursday, August 23, 1979.
Friday, August 24, 1979.
Saturday, August 25, 1979.
Sunday, August 26, 1979.
CHAPTER 19.
Diary from August 27th to September 16th.
Monday, August 27, 1979.
Tuesday, August 28, 1979.
Wednesday, August 29, 1979.
Thursday, August 30, 1979.
Friday, August 31, 1979.
Saturday, September 1, 1979.
Sunday, September 2, 1979.
Monday, September 3, 1979.
Tuesday, September 4, 1979.
Wednesday, September 5, 1979.
Thursday, September 6, 1979.
Friday, September 7, 1979.
Saturday, September 8, 1979.
Sunday, September 9, 1979.
Monday, September 10, 1979.
Tuesday, September 11, 1979.

Wednesday, September 12, 1979.
Thursday, September 13, 1979.
Friday, September 14, 1979.
Saturday, September 15, 1979.
Sunday, September 16, 1979.
CHAPTER 20.
Diary from September 17th to October 19th.
Monday, September 17, 1979.
Tuesday, September 18, 1979.
Wednesday, September 19, 1979.
Thursday, September 20, 1979.
Friday, September 21, 1979.
Saturday, September 22, 1979.
Sunday, September 23, 1979.
Monday, September 24, 1979.
Tuesday, September 25, 1979.
Wednesday, September 26, 1979.
Thursday, September 27, 1979.
Friday 28th and Saturday 29th September 1979.
Sunday, September 30, 1979.
First week of October 1979.
Sunday, October 7, 1979.
Tuesday, October 9, 1979.
Wednesday, October 10, 1979.
Thursday, October 11, 1979.
Friday, October 12, 1979.
Saturday, October 13, 1979.
Sunday, October 14, 1979.
Monday, October 15, 1979.
Tuesday, October 16, 1979.
Wednesday, October 17, 1979.
Thursday, October 18, 1979.
Friday, October 19, 1979.

CHAPTER 21.
Diary from October 20th to November 17th.
Saturday, October 20, 1979.
Sunday, October 21, 1979.
Monday, October 22, 1979.
Tuesday, October 23, 1979.
Wednesday, October 24, 1979.
Thursday, October 25, 1979.
Friday, October 26, 1979.
Saturday, October 27, 1979.
Sunday, October 28, 1979.
Monday, October 29, 1979.
Tuesday, October 30, 1979.
Wednesday, October 31, 1979.
Thursday, November 1, 1979.
Friday, November 2, 1979.
Saturday, November 3, 1979.
Sunday, November 4, 1979.
Monday, November 5, 1979.
Tuesday, November 6, 1979.
Wednesday, November 7, 1979.
Thursday, November 8, 1979.
Friday, November 9, 1979.
Saturday, November 10, 1979.
Sunday, November 11, 1979.
Monday, November 12, 1979.
Tuesday, November 13, 1979.
Wednesday, November 14, 1979.
Thursday, November 15, 1979.
Friday, November 16, 1979.
Saturday, November 17, 1979.
CHAPTER 22.
Diary from November 18th to December 23rd.

Sunday, November 18, 1979.
Monday, November 19, 1979.
Tuesday, November 20, 1979.
Wednesday, November 21, 1979.
Thursday, November 22, 1979.
Friday, November 23, 1979.
Saturday, November 24, 1979.
Sunday, November 25, 1979.
Monday, November 26, 1979.
Tuesday, November 27, 1979.
Wednesday, November 28, 1979.
Thursday, November 29, 1979.
Friday, November 30, 1979.
Saturday, December 1, 1979.
Sunday, December 2, 1979.
Monday, December 3, 1979.
Tuesday, December 4, 1979.
Wednesday, December 5, 1979.
Thursday 6, Friday 7 and Saturday 8 December 1979.
Sunday, December 9, 1979.
Monday, December 10, 1979.
Tuesday, December 11, 1979.
Wednesday, December 12, 1979.
Thursday, December 13, 1979.
Friday, December 14, 1979.
Saturday, December 15, 1979.
Sunday, December 16, 1979.
Monday, December 17, 1979.
Tuesday, December 18, 1979.
Wednesday, December 19, 1979.
Thursday, December 20, 1979.
Friday, December 21, 1979.
Saturday, December 22, 1979.

Sunday, December 23, 1979.
CHAPTER 23.
Diary from December 24, 1979 to January 15.
Monday, December 24, 1979.
Tuesday, December 25, 1979.
Wednesday, December 26, 1979.
Thursday, December 27, 1979.
Friday, December 28, 1979.
Saturday, December 29, 1979.
Sunday, December 30, 1979.
Monday, December 31, 1979.
CHAPTER 24.
Diary from December 24, 1979 to January 15.
Tuesday, January 1, 1980.
Wednesday, January 2, 1980.
Thursday, January 3, 1980.
Friday, January 4, 1980.
Saturday, January 5, 1980.
Sunday, January 6, 1980.
Monday, January 7, 1980.
Tuesday, January 8, 1980.
Wednesday, January 9, 1980.
Thursday, January 10, 1980.
Friday, January 11, 1980.
Saturday, January 12, 1980.
Sunday, January 13, 1980.
Monday, January 14, 1980.
Tuesday, January 15, 1980.
CHAPTER 25.
Diary from January 16th to 22nd.
Wednesday, January 16, 1980.
Thursday, January 17, 1980.
Friday, January 18, 1980.

Saturday, January 19, 1980.
Sunday, January 20, 1980.
Monday, January 21, 1980.
Tuesday, January 22, 1980.
CHAPTER 26.
Diary from January 23rd to February 4th.
Wednesday, January 23, 1980.
Thursday, January 24, 1980.
Friday, January 25, 1980.
Saturday, January 26, 1980.
Sunday, January 27, 1980.
Monday, January 28, 1980.
Tuesday, January 29, 1980.
Wednesday, January 30, 1980.
Thursday, January 31, 1980.
Friday, February 1, 1980.
Saturday, February 2, 1980.
Sunday, February 3, 1980.
Monday, February 4, 1980.
CHAPTER 27.
Diary from February 5th to March 9th.
Tuesday, February 5, 1980.
Wednesday, February 6, 1980.
Thursday, February 7, 1980.
Friday, February 8, 1980.
Saturday, February 9, 1980.
Sunday, February 10, 1980.
Monday, February 11, 1980.
Tuesday, February 12, 1980.
Wednesday, February 13, 1980.
Thursday, February 14, 1980.
Friday, February 15, 1980.
Saturday, February 16, 1980.

Sunday, February 17, 1980.
Monday, February 18, 1980.
Tuesday, February 19, 1980.
Wednesday, February 20, 1980.
Thursday, February 21, 1980.
Friday, February 22, 1980.
Saturday, February 23, 1980.
Sunday, February 24, 1980.
Monday, February 25, 1980.
Tuesday, February 26, 1980.
Wednesday, February 27, 1980.
Thursday, February 28, 1980.
Friday, February 29, 1980.
Saturday, March 1, 1980.
Sunday, March 2, 1980.
Monday, March 3, 1980.
Tuesday, March 4, 1980.
Wednesday, March 5, 1980.
Thursday, March 6, 1980.
Friday, March 7, 1980.
Saturday, March 8, 1980.
Sunday, March 9, 1980.
CHAPTER 28.
Diary from March 10th to 20th.
Monday, March 10, 1980.
Tuesday, March 11, 1980.
Wednesday, March 12, 1980.
Thursday, March 13, 1980.
Friday, March 14, 1980.
Saturday, March 15, 1980.
Sunday, March 16, 1980.
Monday, March 17, 1980.
Tuesday, March 18, 1980.

Wednesday, March 19, 1980.
Thursday, March 20, 1980.
Friday, March 21, 1980.
Saturday, March 22, 1980.
Sunday, March 23, 1980.
Monday, March 24, 1980.
Organizations and institutions mentioned in the newspaper.
Epilogue.
Conclusion.
Literature.
Glossary.
Biography.
Colophon.
Title.
Original title.
Legal Notes / Editorial Note.
Index.